"BLAND AND CORD," A THRILLING NOVEL BEGINS NEXT WEEK

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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"Not a word, witch," he cried.

THE GENTLEMAN ROBBER OR THE MAN FROM NEWGATE

BY

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PART I.

This is my own story. I have been wanting to tell it for years, it has haunted me like a ghost, or like a secret sin which will not down, following me through life with the silent step of the jungle tiger, and appearing whenever I thought I was rid of the terrible specter. I believe I owe it to mankind to relate the true story of the series of events which have brooded over my ill-spent life, while I ask the forgiveness of heaven for whatever I have done amiss in connection with them.

It is not every one who can say that the blood of kings runs in their veins. I will not say that I am proud of my ancestry, for I can trace it back to the loins of Henry the Eighth, the English Bluebeard, who finally went to his reward with the blood of more than one wife on his hands. My mother was proud of her kingly descent and always admonished me to speak of it with the pride that stirred her own soul; but for the life of me I could never bring myself to feel pride. I hated my royal line; I hated the thoughts of it, and more than once, if I had have let out that strain of blood, I would have done so with glee.

I grew up in one of the old manor houses of England. It was one of those great structures, many-roomed, and commodious and was surrounded by a forest through which there were hundreds of paths beautifully laid out even before the days of Henry, the wife-killer. When the red deer lived there, now and then to be hunted by the gallant lords and ladies of the realm.

They let me have my way and, of course, I became a wilful girl, doing what I pleased and I pleased to do a good deal that was not entirely proper. I was seventeen when I was thrown in contact with the man who has blighted my life, Nolan Vanstkirk, the dissolute son of a gentleman who had disinherited him for his follies. Time was coming when I would be rich in my own right, for I was an only child, and on the death of my mother I would fall heir to Oak Forest and all that went with it.

My mother opposed my union with Nolan Vanstkirk. She said he would be both of us a terrible life, and, seeing that she was firm, in an evil hour I surrendered and we eloped. Two years spent on the Continent, during which time we often lived from hand to mouth, and I was back at the old door pleading for mercy. I had fathomed the stream of fancy to its depth, and, with my husband, somewhere a fugitive from justice, for he had committed a forgery, I begged to be taken back. I was not taken back. My mother had spurned her child forever, and I did not blame her. The servants brought me her commands, and at the midnight hour, with the rain beating upon my face, I turned myself Londonward and was in time swallowed up in that mighty town.

Despite my wilfulness, one thing had not been neglected, and that was my education. So far as it was concerned I was fitted for almost any position in life, and when I found myself thrown upon my own resources I fell back upon this stay. In a short time I found myself in the family of Sir Henry Chaffell as governess and, for the time, happy. Of course, I had dropped my maiden name and that of my vagabond husband, and, amid the beauties of Chaffell Manor, I thought that a new chapter of my life had opened, and that I was fitted to become what I should have been long ago, a proud English lady.

But fate was on my track.

One night there broke over the Manor a storm that seemed to shake the old house to its very foundations. A tornado swept through the grove, levelling some of the trees that had stood for centuries; and the creek near the house rose 20 inches in an hour. Incessant lightning played round the place, and the reverberating thunder drove from me cries of abject terror.

For some time I was confined in my chamber, afraid to venture forth, and, as no one called for me, I thought such storms were commonplace. But the storm passed last, after the midnight hour had struck and the violence of the storm had abated, I ventured out and crept down the stairs. The old place seemed deserted, for no one would have thought that its tenants had fled, for only a dim light burned in the library.

I was alone. No doubt my face was still white from fear, for I had not recovered from the effects of the tempest, and I knew not what it had become of Sir Henry and his family.

As I reached the bottom of the broad stone I felt back, for a man came out of the library. I uttered a shriek of terror and shrank against the wall. My husband stood before me! I had not seen him for years. When we parted I never dreamed he would never face me again; but something had told me that some day we would come together in a tragedy of some kind, that I would be pitted against him, and that we would be rendered miserable for life.

Yet, there he stood, looking me in the eye while he held in his hand a large bundle of notes on the Bank of England, which, robberlike, he had abstracted from Sir Henry's safe. It was not surprising to me that he had added robbery to his other crimes, for he was capable of doing anything, and I saw by his eye that he would as lief throttle me as not.

"Not a word, witch!" he hissed, as he advanced, throwing out one of his arms. "I'll make sure work of you if you do. So you've settled down here in the gilded hen, eh? Well, I suppose they don't know who you are? They don't suspect, do they, that you are the wife of——"

"For Heaven's sake, don't speak the name!" I interrupted. "Some one might hear you. You have Sir Henry's money in your hands! You've turned burglar, I see."

"Yes; and I'll do worse than take a few pounds if you open your mouth," was his answer. "I'll shut off your wind, my pretty darling. I thought I would make a raise, and I didn't know of a better place than this one. You don't want to go along with me and become the loved wife of——"

"Don't!" I threw up my hands to emphasize the words, but the latter honor he had left.

"Well, I'll oblige you if you'll do me a little favor. Show me where the plate is."

"What! cried I. "Would you to rob my benefactor?"

"Yaw. Don't be so nice, my little wife. You'll never get caught for it, and besides it will be doing me a favor. You know where they keep the silver, and I know what there's a heap of it."

What could I do? I was at the mercy of this rascal, and he was still my husband; I had sworn to honor and obey him the rest of my natural life, and, though he had threatened me rudely times without number, I had obeyed him until I could do so no longer. He had thrust the banknotes into his breast, and his hands were free to throttle me as it suited his purpose, and, knowing from experience what these hands were, I fell back from him, but escape was out of the question.

He pounced upon me like a tiger, caught me with his hands, which seemed to choke me, and for a moment I felt that my last hour on earth had come. Oh, how I wished for a dagger that I might thrust it into his bosom, even though I pierced the banknotes; but his grip I was as helpless as a child. He dragged me down the corridor hissing his threats into my ears until I gave in.

I showed him where the plate was kept. Indeed, I stood by holding his dark lantern while he rifled the chests of their choicest contents, which he transferred to his bag. One by one, I saw the costliest things vanish in the bag, and at last he turned upon me and let out the laugh of a fiend.

"You can go now," said he. "And if you peach, remember, I will have pay for it if it takes a thousand years."

With these words he threw me from him with a curse, and I fell against the wall, almost unconscious. When I came to myself he was gone, the house was dark and the storm was over. What to do I hardly knew. At last I crept back to my chamber and there wrestled with a thousand questions till dawn. I dared not tell Sir Henry that I was a burglar's wife, that I had even assisted my husband to rob him, that I had slept some after the robbery, thus giving the rascal a chance to get away. No; I dared not confess to these things.

But I was caught. Now, witness the inability of man. Before my recreant lord departed the house he had written on the wall of the lower hall in great letters these terrible words:

"My wife, the Governess, let me in.—The Gentleman Robber."

What could I say when Sir Henry, coming his low life to the surface, burst into my room and confronted me with the terrible accusation of being a burglar's wife and accomplice?

I felt that I had lived too long, that, after all, perhaps, this was but the vengeance of Heaven for my girlish follies, and that I was being paid back in my own coin for running away with Nolan Vanstkirk and deserting one of the best, if vainly proud, mothers. I could not bear the gaze of Sir Henry, but when he dragged me downstairs and confronted me with the writing on the wall, the act of my demon husband, I felt that I would sink through the floor. There it was—the terrible sentence, the first part of which I could not deny, but I had not let him into the house on his mission of plunder.

After a moment of reflection I told Sir Henry all. I asked for no mercy; I did not beg; I was too proud for that. I remember how he listened to the story of my wretched life, with a sinister smile on his lips, and I wondered what he would say when it came his time to deal with me.

"I take your story for the truth, wretched

woman," he said. "I won't turn you out of doors, but I will keep you here to bear witness against Nolan Vansikirk when they catch him."

Then I wished from the bottom of my heart that they would never catch him, that he would put an ocean between him and the law, for if I should be called to testify against him the world would know the truth against his wife.

Days lengthened into weeks and weeks became months and nothing seemed to come of the hunt for my husband. Day after day I rejoiced as I watched the seasons come and go, and at last I became light-hearted again.

Meantime, there had come to the place a young American who had been sent to Sir Henry on a mission of some kind since he came together. Duncan Lacey belonged to one of the oldest families in his country; he was as proud of his ancestry as my mother had been of ours, and, while I tried to avoid him, I found it impossible to do so, for fate brought us together in many ways and at strange places.

I dared not tell him the truth. Time after time, when I felt my love go out to him, I shuddered to think what he would say if he could pierce the veil of my life and read what was behind it. I sometimes wondered what Sir Henry thought of our growing intimacy for I felt that he had carefully studied it, and I even wished that he would tell Duncan Lacey all.

At last the time came for the young American to depart, and I saw him go away with my love upon his brow. My heart was still mine, and, believing that the dream of love was over, I went back to Chaffell Manor to await the search of the law.

Almost before the vessel bearing Duncan Lacey reached the port of the New World, Sir Henry Chaffell received my message and said in accents of triumph:

"You will go up to London tomorrow, Miss Ellen. They have caught that fine lord of yours and you are needed to identify him."

I felt my blood grow cold with these words fell from Sir Henry's lips. Why should I be dragged into court to be made to acknowledge that I was in reality the wife of the greatest burglar of the age? Why must I tell the story of my life to have it printed in the newspapers and discussed on one end of the island to the other and then to cross the seas to be read there by Duncan Lacey? More than once or twice Sir Henry left me I thought of getting beyond the merciless demands of the law by means that would blacken my name more than ever. I walked to the high cliffs that rise from the house and looked down upon the roaring rapids of the little river which would carry me out to sea and bring all future troubles; but when I looked behind me I found George, the gardener, with folded arms reach of me, ready to frustrate any attempt at suicide.

The next day with the whitest of faces I went up to London with Sir Henry. It was true that my husband had been caught, or, at least, the officials were pretty certain of their man, and I was ushered into the stuffy courtroom of Old Bailey.

They had hurried me to tell my face, and I stuck as far from observation as I could. Suddenly a murmur of voices passed across my mind. Until then I had resolved to declare that the prisoner was not the man I had seen at Chaffell Manor that never-to-be-forgotten night; but I suddenly thought that if I could get to his side I had the key for a long term I would be safe. My voluntous beating heart and my short breath while I sat on the hard bench of the stuffy little room waiting to be called.

At last I heard a shuffling of feet near by and when I looked from beneath my veil I saw Nolan Vansikirk, handcuffed to two detectives, walk past me. There was no mistake. The hunted Englishman had been captured the right man and my husband stood at the bar waiting to be identified by his wife.

I heard the charge read with a good deal of interest. Sir Henry, who sat near me, watched me like a hawk, and I am sure half a dozen detectives were doing the same.

Nolan Vansikirk was to be tried first. Never before had I seen him show more confidence. He was certain that by the best of the game, even if he had fallen into the hands of the law. He stood there fully erect and with a cold but victorious smile at his lips. I felt that I could turn him loose with a word, that I could baffle the hounds of justice and send away the coolest robber in the realm. But I never once thought of Duncan Lacey. With Nolan Vansikirk out of the way I was shut in with fate, perhaps for the remainder of his life.

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Miss Coy—Yes.
Miss Ascum—He's a landed freeholder of this country, isn't he?
Miss Coy—Well—he isn't quite landed yet.

I would be free, and then I could cross the sea and—

At this moment I heard the Judge call my name. Sir Henry led me forward and I stood face to face with the prisoner at the bar.

Never will I forget the look I received from Nolan Vansikirk. I had steeled myself for this confrontation; I had summoned all my nerve to my assistance, for I felt that it was the supreme moment of my life.

"Look upon the prisoner at the bar," said the Judge, leaning over his books and gazing at me with a look of pity. "Do you know him?"

For the last time the struggle came up into my mind.

"I do," I said, clearly.

"Who is he?"

"Nolan Vansikirk."

"What relation is he to you?"

I thought my heart would sink within me. "He is my husband, God pity me!" I exclaimed.

"It is the man whom you saw in Chaffell Manor in the capacity of burglar?"

"He is the man."

"Remove the witness."

So briefly was it over and yet the ordeal had been a terrible one.

As I was taken away I caught sight of Nolan Vansikirk's face and it thrilled me as nothing else ever did. It was a living portrait of death; it was the most terrible look I ever saw, and I believe I would have fallen if the young officer who kindly assisted me had not given me his support.

Thus we parted, I hoped and thought forever, and when I was told that Nolan Vansikirk had been sent to Newgate for life I breathed freer and slept well.

Once more I was back at Chaffell Manor, but not to stay. While Sir Henry did not regard me now as the prisoner I took long after his daughter's education, he did not turn me off, but I concluded to go anyhow.

Fortunately the newspapers had dealt lightly with my appearance at the Old Bailey, so lightly, indeed, that I felt that my real identity had not been disclosed, and for this I was thankful. I knew that when ever I wanted a divorce from the man whose name I had borne too long, I could get it; but I resolved to be in no hurry for it. Time would soften my sorrow and perhaps, after all, roses would bloom again in my path.

At the end of three months I received a letter from America, and when I had read it my heart bounded anew. Duncan Lacey had a home for me there and invited me to share it with his love. And in an evil hour; yes, an evil hour, I say, I wrote him that at the end of a year I would cross the sea and try to make him happy with a woman's love.

And what was the love of—a burglar's wife?

PART II.

I was free at last from Nolan Vansikirk. The law had liberated me from all connection with the criminal who sat within the deep shadows of Newgate and brooded over, while he cursed, his situation. So once more would I see the face of my guilty husband, and no man could look me in the face and call me a burglar's wife. I felt like a bird uncaged. I could look forward to a happy love, which, beginning on the shores of England, would come to a full fruition in the land of liberty beyond the seas, while the hardened faces of his jailers would forever confront the prisoner in his cell.

I bided my year with the deepest impatience. I wrote no letters to my mother, for I considered myself lost to her forever, and, then, I did not care to bear more about the "blood of kings." I had had enough of that silly twaddle, for I had resolved to go to Duncan Lacey and show him that I could be a queen among women. It was a laudable ambition, and I hugged the delusion to my heart as a princess hugs her jewels, relics of a lordly line.

When the time came for me to embark I said farewell to no one, for, in fact, I had no confidantes, and so one night I stole through the streets of London for the last time and took the train for Liverpool, where the good ship Corean waited to carry me beyond the shadows of my foolish girlhood. Leaving the pi er just passed I had heard nothing from my late husband. The stone walls of Newgate kept their secret well, and nothing came from behind them to come me to have the slightest feeling of fear.

I landed in New York and took humble lodgings, and Duncan, handsomer than ever, called on me next day. He had come forward me, but his love was warmer than ever, though I feared he would spurn me if he knew the terrible truth. At times I thought of telling him all and of throwing myself upon his mercy, but, cowardlike, I resented the temptation and the weeks passed.

One afternoon a newspaper came to me bearing the well-known postmark of London. I did not recognize the handwriting in which it was addressed, but I opened it with pretty carefully for some marked paragraph and at last I found it, away down in one corner, but it was enough to make my flesh creep.

Nolan Vansikirk had escaped from Newgate!

If the heavens had fallen at my feet I would not have been more astounded. In the days of my flight from England this thing had come to cloud it all. The only man in the world whom I feared, the sole creature whom I had ever sought to shun, had at last had sent him to dungeons and chains. The brief account stated that he, with several others, had effected their escape from that noted prison and were at large somewhere, with the Scotland Yard looking for them.

Then I thought of my fortunate removal and rejoiced in the fact that but one person knew my address, and that was a young woman with whom I had spent the last few months of my life in England. Certainly she had not given away my secret to Nolan Vansikirk. I thought that the newspaper came from her, but still the address did not look like her handwriting.

From the hour I lived in fear. His last look in Old Bailey still lingered in my remembrance. It breathed vengeance and death. It told me that if ever he got the chance my life wouldn't be worth a straw of rowdies. I had lived with him long enough to fathom all his cruel nature to the dregs, and that he was a desperate man my unlucky married existence could testify. Why not fly to Duncan now and tell him everything? His devotedness was proof that he would condone everything and make me happy between me and Nolan Vansikirk. He was as strong of limb as my convict husband, and I doubted not that he could keep him in a test of powers.

But, somehow, I held off. I had deceived Duncan Lacey so far; why not carry out the deception to the end? Perhaps my self-love would not find me; perhaps he did not care to, and would spend the rest of his life in avoiding the scandals of the law. One can imagine my situation. I dared not go abroad lest I should run across that feared face and those devilish hands which I had already felt on my throat. I would remain a locked woman, and when I did go out with Duncan to the play, I kept in the darkest corner of the box and trembled lest I should see Nolan Vansikirk's features within the range of vision. Still fear over me, like the sword of Damocles, my wedding day approached.

I wondered if Duncan noticed my trepidation. Sometimes I would start at the ringing of the door-bell when some other person in the house was wanted, and then I would turn pale and Duncan would forget what he was saying. Nothing more came from England for several weeks, and then came a letter from my friend Letty.

She, womanlike, had a good deal of news to tell and I heard again of the escape from Newgate, with the additional information that the captain had been recaptured. The letter told me more. My mother was dead and now there was no living heir of the proud line of Bonds and to tell me that the blood of "blunt King Hal" flowed in my veins. I shed a few tears at the news of my mother's death, for to her I owed a good deal of my pride, and it was to escape her boasts and tauntings that I had fled with Nolan Vansikirk and wrecked my life. My mother was dead now, but to mine I owed but little, and I had never felt a pang.

A few days after receiving Letty's letter I had written to get some money on a certain which I could not entrust to others, and, entering a car, I started for the farthest end with my veil drawn over my face. Halfway to my destination I happened to take a fleeting glance at my fellow-passengers. In another moment I felt every drop of blood leave my face, for on the opposite side of the car almost facing me sat the evil genius of my life—Nolan Vansikirk.

There was no mistaking the demon. True, he had changed some, perhaps he was somewhat thinner, but I knew him at a glance, and among a thousand I would have recognized him without trouble.

He did not appear to notice me. Perhaps he had not discovered that we had met again, and, of course, I was careful to avoid on this. He had probably fled to America from the house in Chaffell Manor, if not to pity his old trade in the New World. There was something in my discovery that aroused me to action, and I at once acted upon the situation. He was well dressed and had about him an air of independence and indifference that surprised me. But he was the escaped convict—the man from Newgate all the same.

My mind worked rapidly while I was being carried down town and even past my destination. I thought of going quietly to the police and handing information against him. Once shut up he would be beyond power of doing me harm; but, then, the police would not know that I knew who I was, and how I came to recognize the man from Newgate and there I stopped. Flying into silence by a fear.

Passenger and passenger alighted, but Nolan Vansikirk, the man with a number, kept his seat. I now saw that he knew me. There was no mistaking the fact. He had found me at last; perhaps he had crossed the sea to tangle his deadly hands in my throat, and when I thought of this I resolved that it should never be.

At last, tired of his persistence, I alighted and walked rapidly away, not daring to

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long back, though I would have wagered my life that he was on my trail. I dodged into a store like a frightened hare. I dawdled in a strange part of the city, losing myself more than once in the tangle of streets; at last I stepped into a store and purchased a revolver, the dealer looking at me in doubts whether to sell me the weapon or not, but with it in my possession I felt a little safer. Now I was Nolan Vansklkirk equal.

When I turned homeward with my errand forgotten, I saw nothing of my enemy. Perhaps I had lost the scent, but the fear thought that he was in the city was enough to make me shudder. I would see him again. Of course, having found me once, he would never be more unturned to be an agin. Hunted himself, as he must be as a dangerous man, he would not cease to hunt the former wife and when he found her—

I laughed sarcastically when I thought of what might happen then.

For a time I had rest. But suddenly there came to me another terror that gave me anguish. Duncan Lacey began to grow cold toward me. What had happened to chill his warm affections? Had my convict kind of temper discovered my engagement and poisoned Duncan's mind against me? Had some one tattooed and told him all—that I was or had been his wife, and that I had fled him and his Chaffell Manor? When I thought of these things, I thought, too, of turning hunter. I thought of my revolver and, with the revolver at his head, hand him over to the police with a few burning sentences more than five as I was living then.

I lived in a house on the third floor and in the little parlor there Duncan met me. One night when I heard his well-known step on the stairs I resolved to bring everything to a head and to know my fate once and forever.

He seemed pleasanter that night than for many days. He was lover-like, and if some cloud that had obscured his sky had passed away leaving but the clear blue in sight. He greeted me ordinarily, called me Mollie as of old, but there I stopped him. He could not look upon his face and look squarely into his open face, trying in that moment of my extremities to fathom his innermost thoughts, while I mastered myself.

"You love me, Duncan?" said I. "You love me, yet you know not what I have been."

He made a step, falling back a step while his countenance changed and he became a man of another man.

"When have you doubted my love?" he cried. "Mollie, Mollie, what has caused you to think that Duncan Lacey has not given you all the love of his heart?"

"I have not doubted it, only you would not love me if you knew my past."

"You have a past, child—all?"

"I have told you little," said I, still watching him. "I have kept the secret of my life. I have never told you that I have been—"

I hesitated. The hated words that trembled on my tongue I feared to speak. I stood before him like one driven into silence by the terrible secret I had kept so well from him; there was something so hellborn in what surged up into my brain that I stood and merely looked, wishing that the sea rushed over me a thousand fathoms high.

He did not speak. I saw that his strong, manly nature was shocked into awed silence by my words. He leaned his cheek on the mantel ticked like doom, and I no longer heard the rush of the sound-soaked city below. We were alone and the time had come for the truth. Nolan Vansklkirk had driven me to it.

"Quit this room and forget me." I suddenly went on. "Go from the city or beyond the seas and find another love while I go and meet my fate. No; I will do more than that. I will have the blood of a human being on my hands if you pass as I have never loved before. I would cast myself into the Bay for you; I would wear my fingers to the knuckles as your slave; but I will deceive you no longer. I am not what I have been to you. I am the divorced wife of a convict. I am the hunted cast-off love of one of the most desperate criminals my native land ever produced. He has come for me. He has escaped from Newgate and for weeks has been my shadow. You hear me, Duncan? I have been the wife of Nolan Vansklkirk, and, as such, I dare not think of claiming your pure affections."

I turned away and walked across the little room which had suddenly grown stifling. A smothering feeling seemed to get my throat in its grasp, and I could look at him. I felt, however, that he was standing in the middle of the floor with his eyes riveted upon me, with hate flashing from them and every bit of lovelight departed from the features I loved.

"You, all that?" I heard him say, and his voice seemed to have changed. "You, Mollie, the divorced wife of this wretched criminal, Englishly a terror? You should have told me this before."

I turned upon him and held out my hands.

"I had not the heart to tell you," I said, for the moment nearly breaking down, "for I knew that you would think me not the only real sunshine it has ever known; because I saw in your love happiness and the eternal vanishment of the clouds that have shadowed my unfortunate existence. But go, Duncan Lacey. I have no longer the slightest claims upon you. You will not stoop to mate with the consort of a burglar. I will go back to England. I will hide myself among the slums of London, and become what I should be—the companion of the vile and the scum of society."

"Woman, you are mad!" he cried.

"No, I am guilty. The foulest deception woman ever practiced on man I have practiced on you. Let me go back to my former mate. Let me take up again with Convict Number 2345 and live out the life fate cut short. Duncan, I am going now."

He did step aside, looking at me with a face I never can forget, and, pushing myself for the last great trial, I passed him and laid my hand on the knob of the door.

"Love!" exclaimed Duncan Lacey, and I felt his arms around me.

My feelings that perhaps never since the fall surged up into a woman's bosom, I sprang down the steps. I stopped a moment at the first landing but heard nothing. In the middle of the second flight I fell back in the arms of my husband.

Beneath me, with his foot on the bottom step, stood Nolan Vansklkirk.

The demon was looking up at me with the grin of an imp on his face. There was also in his eyes a look of triumph which I could distinguish despite the semi-gloom that prevailed. Behind him I saw no help. And there he stood, waiting again to lord it over me and to take out the final vengeance of months.

I felt myself crushed down to him, but there was something in my hand. The man from Newgate did not see it, and my fingers gripped it with the strength of desperation and despair. Two steps above him I staggered, but leaned forward.

"What do you want?" said I.

"You!" hissed the man below. "I have come for you. I always said I would have you back. I have crossed the seas for my little wife."

His voice seemed to ring through the entire house as I flashed the word, an echo to it. I felt that I was free and I knew the device, but I sprang down another step, thrust the revolver into his face, saw a distorted face, heard a loud report, and saw a human figure reel toward the door.

Then I fell.

Years have passed since that terrible night.

Duncan and I, with the children, have spent many months together. The beach which reminds me so much of my English home, and the sea in which I bathe. But a singular impulse has constrained me to tell the story of my life as I have never wholly told it before.

Nolan Vansklkirk, wounded slightly by my pistol-shot, escaped from the state prison awful night and two weeks later, in trying to leap on the other car, he fell under the wheels of a swiftly passing train and ended his ill-spent life.

Perhaps the future has forgetfulness for me. Perchance in the days of love to come I may outlive the past; and, although I am supremely happy in the love of husband and little ones, I fear I can never obliterate the memory that clings to me like ivy—the hated recollection that once I was the wife of Convict 2345, known in English prison annals as the Man from Newgate.

(The end.)

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Trouble.

Editor—Why, what's wrong, Colonel? I merely said you were a prominent "anti" trust advocate.

Colonel—But your dumbed printer made it "antithirst."

Why It Was.

"Doctor, what do you mean by charging me $20 for this operation? I thought you said the price would be only $10."

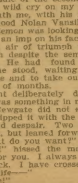
"Exactly."

Miseries of Heiresses.

Dora—How miserable Arthur looks since I rejected him.

Clara—I don't wonder, poor fellow. Now he'll have to work for a living.

Slip of the Tongue.



He—And do you always go to a watering place in the summer?

She—Oh, yes; you see, papa is in the milk business.

No Trouble for Him.

May—Do tell me, Pearl, how Mr. Timmerman ever plucked up courage enough to propose. He is so awfully bashful.

Pearl—Oh, he seemed to do it easily enough. I merely asked him if he didn't think mamma would make an ideal mother-in-law and he spoke right up.

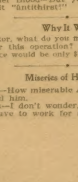
May—What did he say?

Pearl—Said he thought she would.

May—Well, then?

May—Nothing. I just told him the kind of rpig I wanted.

Regular Sleuth.



Lady—And is he a good watchdog?

Dog Peddler—Ma'am, I never in all my life saw his equal. You ought or just see him watch a meat wagon goin' by.

Paid for His Baggage.

It is seldom that the drummer of the period gets the worst of it on the road. He usually contrives to get the best of everything at all times and places, yet one of the galaxy in Atlanta put his foot in a neat trap of his own setting the other day. On entering a train about to start he approached a stranger and said:

"Are I and I right on this train?"

"I am."

"Have you got any baggage?"

"No."

"Well, my friend, you can do me a favor, and it won't cost you anything. You see, I've been rousing big trunks and they always make me pay extra for one of them. You can get one checked on your ticket and we'll eachre them, see?"

"Yes; but I have no ticket."

"Ah! I thought you said you were going on this train?"

"So I am, I'm the conductor."

The baggageman escaped the customary "kick" when he levied the assessment for extra weight.

STRONGER THAN HATE

Or THE FIRE THAT WOULD NOT DIE.

By ERNEST DE LANCEY PIERSON.

"None of that, young man."

(Copyright, 1903, by W. D. Boyes Co.)

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CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD BARN.

Jeoffrey Hale reached the river again not far from the scene of his recent exploit. It was only by luck in the course of his long stream that he could hope to gain his uncle's home.

By this time the train detective must have reached the police station, carried there by the victorious three. Would he be able to prove his identity? Hale hoped not quickly, and he chuckled at the stupidity to keep the little man at least for a while in durance. It was hardly likely that that brilliant representative of the law would give up such an important prisoner without a fight for it.

The exciting incidents of the past hour had well-nigh exhausted Hale in a state of collapse. He wondered how he had been able to endure so much and yet be able to stand on his feet. But the man who is strengthened by despair, who is struggling for liberty, obstacles fail to overcome. Under such conditions a chasm is but a ditch. A mountain is a mere bean of earth. At such a time even the weakest physically frequently develops a power and a fortitude of resource that approaches the supernatural.

Hale ran stumbling on feeling that he must be very near his destination. He was anxious to place a good distance between him and any possible pursuit.

It was not likely that after such a humiliating adventure that the tenacious Jeffcott would abandon him. It was not pleasant to think that he should have the police on always at his heels dogging him day by day until his object had been gained. It amused him to fancy the scene that must now be transpiring in the police station.

His wet clothes had now frozen stiff as a suit of mail and greatly hampered his movements. The experiences of that pitiful pilgrimage he remembers even to this day.

The frowning sky showed that another storm was approaching. To be overtaken by it to the open would mean certain death. Life seemed doubly sweet to him for all he had passed through. He wanted to live if only to sound the depths of the mysterious affair which had brought him so much trouble and suffering. Laura must be able to throw some light on the question. He would seek her out after a time and try and get an explanation.

He must find some place of shelter to avoid the storm. What a deserted and unwelcome country it was through which he passed. In his present condition, with ragged and frozen clothes, his hands torn and bleeding, he was a sorry sight that he met no one on the road. He must look like a very suspicious character. Jeffcott might at any time renew the pursuit.

But he was exhausted and felt that he could not keep up much longer. He had not now the stimulation of excitement to sustain him. He was on the verge of collapse, standing in the midst of a pasture. Some distance away he stood a building painted a vivid red, a conspicuous object against the white of the snow.

There was no sign of smoke ascending from the farmhouse chimney and the place bore a deserted appearance. But it would be a good omen, for if the owners had been at home they would surely have kept up a fire on such a cold day.

Rest he must have even if he risked much. The old barn first calling to decay could be a shelter. At the back he found a hole through which he could crawl. It gave him a sense of relief to find himself no longer at the mercy of the storm.

Evidently the place was not used as a stable now, for the stalls were empty, a few mouldy pieces of harness hung from nails, the haymow contained some decayed traces of straw. But here was rest and shelter from the storm, and he was grateful enough to have discovered such a refuge.

Hale's first thought was that he had left to the mow. Then took off his overcoat and disposing it on the floor rolled some straw on top. Here he meant to lie, and perhaps he would be able to wear the garment when he set out again.

While he was arranging his unsavory couch he found a rag-bag of an old pair of overalls and a jumper hanging from a nail in the stable below. They were old and dusty, but he viewed them with delight. Now he would have something to wear while his other clothes were drying.

They were rather airy for this time of the year, but he was not disposed to find fault. He secured these musty prizes and then crawling into his perch made a quick change. No young man donning his first dress suit and starting out to conquer society could have felt more satisfaction than Jeoffrey as he put on the garments. Fortunately, the little money he carried with him was in gold and silver in a money belt about his waist. The bills were reduced to the condition of a sickly green pulp.

Having arranged his clothes as best he might to thaw them out he smuggled under a pile of straw and was soon asleep. A sleep so heavy as to resemble death. It was time, no doubt he would have been able to slumber for twenty-four hours if the sense of danger ever present in his thought had not filled even his troubled dreams.

He awoke at first unable to recall where he was. He had a feeling, too, that something was about to happen. Then he heard the crunching sound as of heavy boots on the snow without. Was he never to have peace?

He felt that he should have liked to go on sleeping for days—weeks—what he had enjoyed was only a nap, and here was some one coming to deprive him of his rest. Who was without—friend or foe?

This time the little man would find him an easy victim. He had no longer the energy to engage in such a struggle as the last. All he wanted was sleep and plenty of it.

He rose on his hands and knees and crawled over to the edge of the platform. He looked down toward the double doors with anxious eyes.

Presently they were wrenched open and a man entered. He was followed by another, a farmer and hands. His round face not unkind in expression was purple with the cold. He was singing to himself in a rasping voice:

"Hev' ye seen me Uncle Lickey,
He wears a coat that
A coat of friese, would dazzle yer eyes
A nobby blue cravat.
He's a red nose and his stockin' feet,
He's a voice like the sound of a dreom.
Sure me Uncle Lickey,
He carries a stick
That would knock the divil doomb!"

Jeoffrey watched the newcomer and wondered what had brought him there. The man seemed a little uncertain what he had come for himself, as he examined the pieces of harness hanging on the walls and then looked about him in a dazed way.

Perhaps he would go away after a time and then Hale could set out for Laura. In the meantime he could resume his journey. He must be very near his destination now.

The good-natured looking farmer in good disposition to go, but sat down on a box, and drawing out a bottle of what seemed as large as a teacup, proceeded to gravely fill and light a pipe.

He had taken up his position directly under where Hale was lying, so that the latter had to stretch out his head to see that the man was doing.

The unfortunate wrapped in thought and the watcher began to recover some of his composure. He concluded that he was not on the lookout for him. He had merely sneaked out to the deserted barn for a smoke in a sheltered place.

Hale watched him for some minutes as he sat there, his pipe between his lips, his head sunk on his massive breast, and the glue dropped from his mouth but without waking him.

It was suffocating. Good-natured as the fellow looked, Jeoffrey did not feel as if he could throw himself on his mercy.

Very slowly he began to crawl to the edge of the platform. The clothes he had removed were now dry and he carefully began to scrape on the shabby garments he had found. They were dry and warm. Then removing his few valuables he put on the overcoat and cravatet hook to take a final observation.

The man was still smoking.

There was a window at the further end of the barn. He could manage to get out that open it would be but a small jump to the ground. He moved toward this point when suddenly the rotten planks gave way beneath him and he dropped to the floor below.

Just as he scrambled to his feet he felt a heavy hand fall on his shoulder. He dragged into the light.

"What have we here? Is it that rogues on high?" growled his captor. "Show us yer p'nits, buzzard!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOST OF THE RED HOUSE.

"What have we here?" growled the big man, at the same time shaking Hale so vigorously as almost to deprive him of the power of speech.

"How can I when you are choking me?" he gasped indignantly, but with a sense of reasoning and in a measure relaxed his throttling grip.

Jeoffrey Hale was like a child in the hands of the big fellow and did not attempt to make any resistance. He had reached the stage of feeling when it mattered little what happened to him.

His captor for all his loud, rough voice did not seem to be an unkind person. Should he throw himself on his mercy? Hale hesitated. He might come to it finally, but in the meantime he would see what the big man's nature is little longer.

"Why, it's a boy, and durn ye?" grumbled the blond bear. "Then, set, and be hanged to ye, at the same time dropping Hale like a sack of meal on a bench by the door.

"Now, we kin talk friendly like. Yer a tough-lookin' citizen, an' no mistake," was his ungracious remark, as he scrutinized Hale's face as carefully as if he meant to paint his portrait. "Any blast of ye hain't got on some of my old duds," a little wrathfully, as he took note of the jumper and overalls. "Ye must hev' been mighty hard up to climb inter them things. I thought it would be a insult to the birds to rig up a scarecrow in them garments."

"I was hard up," stammered Jeoffrey. "I happened to fall in the water and crawled into this barn to dry myself. My own clothes are up in the mow."

"Hum, that's curious. Now, do you know what I think of you?"

Hale shook his head wearily.

"Wal, it's my opinion that you hain't none for no good. The old man has got a expectation of havin' a sight o' money an' the's ye're several attempts on the part of various hellions to git some on it. But the old man an' me looked out for that. We kin see a hot time. They didn't get paid fur their work. We don't need no watch dog here, we don't. I fits me pipe," with a grin. "They can mebbe pizen a dog, but they can't pizen me."

"Well, I didn't come here for any wrong purpose," murmured Jeoffrey, feeling that it was useless to try and convince this incorruptible Cerberus regarding the innocence of his intentions. "As I told you, I came here only to dry my clothes."

"Well, I kin show ye where we kin dry 'em better," replied his captor, grimly. As he spoke he lifted Hale to his feet easily with the effort of one arm.

"Where are you going to take me?"

"Wal, it might be to call on a pretty lady in her boodore, and then ag'in it might be to a salvation meeting to get yer soul dittoed up for a trip to the stars, but it hain't likely."

"Where, then?" asked Jeoffrey, as he submitted without any resistance to having his arms pinioned.

The big man, holding one end of the rope, pushed him toward the door.

"You ask too many questions, young man, considerin' that I hain't on the witness stand. I'm goin' t' take ye to the red house yander to wait until the guv'nor gets home from his rabbit shootin'. I allus does that with parties I finds snoopin' 'round the premises. A sight of pesky fish I've catched in my net, I tell ye. When the guv'nor gets back he'll settle what's to be done with ye. He generally keeps 'em shet up till he hits git word to the perlice."

This was not very comforting news to Jeoffrey, but under the circumstances he would not help himself. Perhaps in time he was once in the red farm-house a chance of escape might offer.

Somehow he did not feel so despondent over the situation as before his stood in the barn and he stepped out in the sun, pure which caused his captor to remark:

"Don't dog no definition that the old man'll be merciful to ye. I'm a innercent suckin' dove compared to that respected pirate and make no mistake. He in'ys game and is never so well satisfied as when it's men critters. It's the only diversion he has in these lonesome parts, for the neighbors which is none removed, don't cotton to him none. It don't hurt his feelin's, for he likes a wuthle heart than to be let alone. He'll give ye a fair run for yer money of yer all right, but don't let him catch ye in no lie or he's likely to snap yer head off."

This was not a very promising description of the host of the red house, but Hale hoped he would prove less savage than he had been pictured. A man who lived apart from his fellows might be willing to judge him by other standards than that which obtained with his commonplace neighbors.

By this time they had reached the red house. It was an unpretentious affair of red brick two stories high and almost covered with a tangle of vines, now whitened with snow.

"Ain't very pretty is it?" asked the talkative watch dog of the establishment. "Still," with a grim attempt at humor, "I hears that there is more to a house than it's only so handsome."

Jeoffrey shivered and was silent. The place certainly did seem forbidding in that light and he wondered what sort of a reception he would receive when the "Guv'nor" returned.

The big man half-led, half-pushed him along to the rear of the house, where he entered by the back door into a deserted garden. Crossing this, he paused before a door which he threw open. Hale looked, and they entered what must be the kitchen and at the same time a living room.

It was paved with red tiles and on one side yawned a huge fireplace that might have served for the cooking of an ox if the sort some pike knots had soon kindled a cheerful blaze.

What a delicious feeling of content the heat with a genial glow of warmth that engulfed down into a corner of the settle. Jeoffrey felt that no punishment might follow so long as he was allowed to sit there in the glorious warmth.

His captor arranged the fire to his satisfaction the big fellow pulled out a stool and sitting down on it with his knees apart and his hands he scrutinized his prisoner long and carefully.

"Now, I come to look at ye in a good light I must say that I've seen worse faces than yours, and worse heads, at that. Jeoffrey should become too hopeful by reason of this flattering observation added.

"But I hears that some of the smoothest villains is right good to look at."

Jeoffrey, who was doing a good no attention, but it was not long before the big man began to question him. He was anxious to have some one to talk to.

"I guess I'll peck a bone with ye riding, and you look as if you might manage to do something, too." So saying, he strode out of the room.

The next thing Hale heard was the sound of a heavy axe slamming on the bench beside him and a growling invitation to eat.

"I don't know but what you might handle it better of I was to loose yer arms a bit," continued this grim humorist. "Less yer built like the lady I seen once at a dime museum what could eat fried oysters right handy holding a fork with her toes," as he spoke he untied the rope that fettered Jeoffrey's hands.

The prisoner did not wait for a second invitation to fall to, and enjoyed the cold

meat and bread as never any meal in the palmiest days of the past.

His grumpy host watched him with evident satisfaction and then brought him a great mug of sour cider with which to wash down the repast.

Jeoffrey was beginning to feel something like himself again. He commenced to think that by this time Jeffcot must be raging somewhere about the neighborhood and that any moment might appear at the door. It was not pleasant to consider resuming his wanderings. It was so very comfortable in the red house, so distinctived to brave the stormy day again.

He really felt too weak to go on. What was to be done?

"It's mighty near the time that old b'ar was a showin' up," he heard the big man say. A moment later the front door slammed and there was the sound of heavy boots in the hall. Then a stentorian voice roared out:

"Who's on guard?"

"I be."

"Good. Guard, yer relieved from duty for the present."

Jeoffrey understood now that the "old pirate" of whom he had been disrespectfully talked had returned. But he still sat there with his eyes shut, dozing, in no hurry to have his peace disturbed.

"Who the devil have we here?" roared a voice now close to his ear.

"A prisoner, General. I captured the fellur just outside the breastworks."

"And a mighty hang-dog face he has on him, to be sure," was the reply.

"Shall we courtmartial him?"

"To be certain. Such a desperate-lookin' character must be judged at once."

It was at this point in the proceedings that Jeoffrey decided his presence might be saw standing before him a little fat man whose round, red face was framed in by snowy whiskers. He wore a suit of brown corduroy much the worse for wear, and his face was wrinkled in a fierce scowl.

Jeoffrey rubbed his eyes and stared at the old man for a moment, then rose to his feet with a cry. The old fellow, with extraordinary alertness for a man of his age, pushed him back on the settle with the remark:

"None o' that, young man, none o' that! Don't you attempt any violence against the commanding officer of ye know what's good for ye!" Then he fell back and stared at the prisoner in mute astonishment.

"Thunder and Mars, who be ye, anyway?" he added.

"Your nephew, Jeoffrey Hale, that's all, sir," said the young man, amused at the old man's expression.

"Well, I'll be tectotally ——," returned the uncle, expectorating with vehemence. "Here, you big Peter," turning to the other man who was not the least surprised of the trio, "clear out of here at once. I've found my nephew. Couldn't you see there was a family resemblance, 'fore you made a fool of yerself by runnin' him in?"

"The resemblance!" chuckled the other, "and you was just sayin' he had the face of a sneerer and a highway robber. Well, I swan to goodness," and he retreated from the room, fairing while the old man pursued him with threatening words.

"You be stuck out from that fellow," said the uncle with a twinkle in his eye, as he came and sat down by Jeoffrey. "Well, my lad, I should a-said a call from you and in rags, too," as he looked his nephew over curiously and closely. "But you're ever welcome just the same," and he pressed the young man's hand warmly and looked at him with kindly eyes. "Why, I thought you was down in Florida."

"I was, but I came back a couple of days ago," replied Jeoffrey, wondering if he could make the old man understand the situation.

"You seem to have got into a sight of trouble in them two days," and Uncle John's beady eyes traveled up and down over his shabby relative in a manner that was very embarrassing to the subject. Then he patted Jeoffrey on the shoulder. "Now, you tell the old man all about it, and maybe I can help you. Whatever you done anything worth while you can depend on me to stick to you."

"I have done nothing wrong, but what has been done me," said the nephew, and, encouraged to proceed, he told his uncle everything that had happened up to the present.

When he was done Uncle John rose and stumped up and down the room, evidently very much disturbed in mind.

"Well, that's the most curious yarn I ever heerd on," he said, as he bit off a huge piece of tobacco from the pigs he produced from his pocket. "It's my opinion that you have gone through a lot of fuss that ye might have spared yerself."

"How can that be?"

"This young woman you was engaged to fore ye went to Cuby sent ye a note to come and see her, and when you arrived at the meetin' place a couple of men was there to nab ye. That looks to me like a put-up job neither more nor less."

"Uncle, I don't know Laura, or you would never suspect her capable of such an infamous trick," exclaimed Jeoffrey, enthusiastically. "No; it is my belief that her stepmother got wind of the appointment, and as she never liked me, took measures that she hoped would forever separate us."

"And who was the other feller—I don't see all that in your business. Depend on it, she has somethin' to do with it."

"No, no," protested his nephew, violently. "All right, don't get het about it, for that's the sayin' is, it's your funeral. I don't see but what, under the circumstances, you'd have to bear it even if ye can't grin. I guess the trouble ain't all over, neither. If that detective is the man you make me think he is. But enough now. You better lay off and get a good sleep for you must be all fagged out. I'll think the matter over, though I don't believe I can be of any use as long as you persist in them heroic notions about the dead-and-gone. I'll send out food story book. But you deserve to come out ahead for that pretty trick you played on the detective, and I'll be proud of some way with which he improvised a bed in few moments.

Jeoffrey's head had hardly touched the pillow before he fell asleep. He became dimly aware of the old man's presence beside him. He reheersed all the circumstances at his flight as the fever became more vividly real.

Uncle John was in a torment of anxiety lest the detective should be on his way to help his sick relative as he paced nervously up and down the room.

"Gosh! but it would be unfortunate if that little black devil of a detective was to light in here now," as he looked down at the flushed face of his nephew. "I don't believe he'd stick at the post, the little boy!"

At that moment a resounding knock at the front door made the old house shake.

"Who's that, Pete?" he asked the big fellow who had just appeared.

"Open in the name of the law," and the knock was repeated louder than before.

CHAPTER IX.
HIDE AND SEEK.

"Phew! This is a leetle more than I bargained for!" muttered Uncle John, as the sounding raps on the outer door continued mopping his forehead with a red handkerchief.

Let 'em knock," said Peter. "That there door could stand a cannon.

"But him" pointing to the sick man. "What are we goin' to do with him, Big Peter?"

"What about the little room over the summer kitchen?"

"Why, that is filled with the winter wood."

"All the better," and without another word, the big fellow gathered Geoffrey up in his arms, bedclothes and all, and carried his burden into a room off the kitchen, where a ladder led up to a small attic reached through a hole in the ceiling.

Big Peter mounted this, quickly, and laying the sick man on the floor, began to arrange the pile of logs in the corner of the room. He made an opening where he could deposit his charge and then over all placed logs, leaving but little room for others. This would afford ventilation and yet screen Jeoffrey completely.

Fortunately the young man was asleep, and was thus unconsciously passing away. If he only remained quiet long enough there was a chance of his escaping detection.

Peter, having arranged things to his satisfaction, cast a hurried look around the attic as if to be sure he had left nothing suspicious in sight, and then slipped down the ladder. The trap was closed and hid in a closet in the outer kitchen. Old Hale was walking impatiently up and down, but was pleased when he heard what steps the other had taken to protect their invalid guest. Then they listened to the echo the knock had for the moment ceased.

"Now for open the door all, Big Peter," said he. "And, mark me, they don't take you with no fuss. I'll not have none bruises and I count on you to help me."

"Right you are, General," and he and Peter got hold of the pelicans in," and, with a firm step, he walked down the hall and threw open the front door.

"Anybody out there? It seems to me that I hear a voice," he said in a mild voice.

A little man stepped out whom he had no trouble in recognizing by the description given him as Detective Jeffcot.

"Were you all asleep?" growled the latter, with a scowl for the old man.

"No, not all; just a few of us."

"Well, I've been knocking here for a half hour."

"That's what might you want, Mister?" meekly.

"I am looking for a man who broke into a New York house. I have reason to believe that he is in this neighborhood, perhaps in this house. My name is Jeffcot, of the New York detective service."

"Ah, indeed!"

"I suppose you have no objections to my looking over the premises?"

"No, not at all, only I'm afraid some of the people round here have been foolin' you with a yarn. There's a lot of that sort popular with the critters, and I guess they've been playing it on you, sir."

"Well, if I've made a mistake it will soon be set right," returned the detective, still in a bad humor over his experience. "Lead on, old chap, and I'll follow."

The old man led the way into a small parlor, which from the dust on the furniture, looked as if it had not been used for months.

The detective took out a folding pocketlantern and began to search. This was evidently used as he glanced around.

"You go, Pete, and followed the old man into the kitchen.

"You don't live here all by yourself, I presume?" said the detective as his eyes turned here and there about the apartment.

"Oh, no, I have a female servant who has been with me for years. Want to see him? Heh, Peter! Peter!" he called out.

"Aye, aye, sir!" and the bulky figure of the servant appeared in the doorway. "Was you pleased to call me?"

"Yes; this gentleman is of the New York detective police, and wishes to look over the an escaped burglar concealed on the premises."

"Ho, ho! Well, now, that would be curious if it was true, and we not know anything about it."

"Never mind that, Peter, we must satisfy the gentleman. Have you not taken a new boarder such as he describes," said the old man, sowing a wink at the servant as he drew the place, for I am tired after my day's shooting," and he dropped down in a big chair by the fire.

As they were turning away he caught Big Peter's eye; he had seen enough to know that was to prevent, even with violence, the sick man's being taken away.

"Just let me have a look over this room before we go further," said Jeffcot, and as he went here and there, nosing about like a ferret in search of a rat.

Suddenly he stooped by the fire and picked up a battered hat. He examined it carefully, turning it over in his hands.

"Does this happen to belong to either of you gentlemen?" he asked, with a keen, searching look from one to the other of the two men.

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"Then how do you account for it blowing from the north at the present time?" said the tourist.

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CHAPTER VII.
THE OPENED SHUTTER.

Again Battle was in an inky blackness of darkness in that little room in Hexter House with no companion, but the man who had been murdered there so mysteriously.

His need to escape from that apartment seemed to him to increase with every passing moment and his chances for escape seemed to lessen.

The passage of time that made his situation there more and more dangerous and terrible, revealed to him clearly and more clearly the folly of his hoping by any ordinary means to escape from that apartment and from Hexter House.

As he stood in the middle of the room thinking—hardly planning, for he recognized no chance upon which he might be built a plan—the words of Bibb repeated themselves in his mind:

"Your mission will call for both nerve and cunning, but more nerve than cunning will be demanded. You never get rattled, you are always to be depended upon. You are to go into this house as long as you can and find out as much as you can. I believe that before you finish your work you will find it physically impossible to remain there."

To Battle there was something that was reassuring in his remembrance of those words, something that spoke to himself many times, and each time they gave him new hope, and that hope grew stronger as it appear less.

"If Bibb said, too: 'I believe there is only one person in Hexter House, a person who, physically, would be helpless for you at all, Battle.' Surely, Bibb must have been mistaken on that point.

Battle had seen two persons in Hexter House.

The weeping woman in mourning who had admitted him and ushered him into that room.

The tall, dark, sinister man, and the younger and fatter man, who had been shot and then murdered by the other in his very presence.

The two beautiful women, one flaxen-haired, the other tawny-faced, who had been with the two men in the hall.

The lovely old lady in black who for some time had been in her silent chamber on that little room.

Battle had reason to believe that the tall, dark man was not only strong and agile but cruel and pitiless. That he was the only person whom Battle had seen there from whom the young detective thought any able-bodied man would be in possible danger to be in any danger.

While Battle thought, he resolved. He would banish all fear and carry out his instructions. Seeking a means of escape was a clear violation of duty.

He was to remain as long as might be possible. He had been fairly warned of his peril, and if he had not wanted to encounter it he should have withdrawn to enter upon this mission.

"Perhaps after all, this dark man whom I believe to be an assassin, would be no match for me in a mix-up. Anyhow, if Bibb was mistaken on one or two points, that fact hardly releases me from obligations to do the best I can now that I am here.

He groped his way to the chair that the old lady had occupied and sank into it with a feeling of resignation.

"If I can do nothing else," he murmured, "I can at least wait, and I will do so with what patience I may. A waiting game is not always a losing game."

Hours passed, and at length Battle slept. When he awoke and looked about him, he was the only occupant of the room, living or dead, as the old lady had long since.

The place was lighted brilliantly and the body of the blindfolded murdered man no longer sat in the chair at the other side of the room.

Battle sprang up and uttered a cry of surprise when The Hague tribunal at the iron shutter and its three massive padlocks.

"Heavens!" he cried, "that shutter was covered with blue paint when it is red! The three big padlocks were iron—now they are brass! Otherwise, the room is the same unchanged."

He approached the chair in which he had seen the body of the dead man and there was no blood upon it. There was no blood upon the floor, nor on the wall back of the chair.

"No evidences of crime remain here," he murmured. "So much the better for me. But how was the body removed—how was the shutter exchanged or repainted—how were the locks changed, without awakening me? Surely, I don't sleep soundly enough to be proof against so much noise as there must have been. Or, perhaps some one did this would have taken pains to arouse a stranger sleeping here."

He turned to the iron inner shutter that he believed concealed a window.

He got up on the chair in which the old lady had sat and in which he had slept, he knew not how long, and handled the three huge padlocks one by one.

"Nothing could be stronger," he exclaimed. "Nothing could be more secure."

While he could easily touch the locks, he could not reach the shutter itself—that iron barrier between himself and the outside world which had been blue and was now red—without descending to the floor and approaching it as he had done when twice he had ignited matches on its surface.

As he stood on the floor again, the chair was in his way and he took it up and set it to one side.

Then with the tip of his right forefinger he touched the shutter.

"That paint is not fresh," he thought. "The shutter has not been repainted since I slept. Yet, its color is changed. Surely, there is no magic in this. Somehow the other shutter has been taken down and this one, of a different hue and with locks of brass instead of locks of iron, has been put in its place."

Mystified beyond further speech, he sank upon the chair, and as he did so received a blow on the back of the head that made him dizzy.

He staggered up to see the iron shutter standing wide open and knew that it had come in contact with his head as it had swung back.

Through the now uncovered window he gazed on a scene of rare beauty that lay beyond and below it—the most lovely garden of flowers that he had ever beheld.

CHAPTER VIII.
"BEWARE OF THE TIGER IN HIS DESPAIR."

Leaning partially out of that one window of the little room in Hexter House, which, now that the iron shutter was out of the way, Battle had no difficulty in opening, the young detective gazed down into a park-like expanse that was a veritable picture of bloom and of beauty.

He saw tropical trees and plants; flowers of many hues and colors; fountains playing in a subdued bluish light that made every standing drop of water appear like a priceless diamond; a small lake on whose bosom black swans floated to and fro and fowls of many a gorgeous feather disported at plea-

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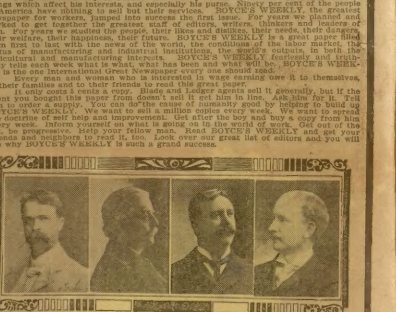

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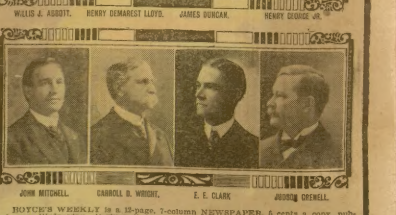

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sure; and, perched on tree and bush, darting hither and thither over land and water, beautiful songsters, hundreds of brilliant plumage, poured forth a flood of melody that rose to the vault of Heaven which hung over all, blue and cloudless, star-lit and splendid.

The people in the boats looked far away and speck-like. So tiny did they appear that they might have been fairies, but Battle believed in neither fairies nor ghosts. He looked for men and women.

Across an open space walked the tall, dark, sinister-appearing man whom Battle believed to be an assassin, and clinging to his arm was the woman of resplendent brunette beauty whom Battle had seen with him in the hall.

As the couple came forth fully into the light, Battle saw that the man's face was still set in anger and that his companion was weeping.

Then another form appeared. It was that of the blonde, flaxen-haired woman whom Battle had seen with the man who, he believed, had become the victim of the swarthy man's anger or vengeance.

As she appeared, the man dropped the arm of his companion and advanced a step or two toward her, his hands almost touching her, a look of eager longing on his face and in his dark eyes.

The woman then he was slighting stepped forward and laid a restraining hand on his shoulder, and he turned from toward her with a scowl on his visage that portended the hell of the word which was a curse.

The fair, fragile creature who was evidently the recipient of that forbidding man's most unwelcome devotion, turned her back upon him, shuddering, touching.

Battle saw her face raised and noted how beautiful it was, and how radiance that was over all the scene; then, with no little surprise, he saw that she was looking directly at herself.

A moment later she stretched her arms out toward him, and the young man fell rather than heard the word she spoke or thought.

"Come!"

As the significance of her appeal entered her soul, he experienced a change no less mystifying than complete—an extraordinary transformation, by which he lost his identity as Battle and knew himself as the slender, fair-haired, blue-eyed man who, he believed, had been murdered in that room.

"Edna!" he cried. "Edna! I am coming!"

She held her arms out toward him again, still more beseechingly.

He knew her. She was Edna Chelmsford; he knew it. He knew he knew that he loved her. He knew, too, that Aubrey Huntington loved Edna and that Blanche Osbourne, to whom Huntington was bound by every tie of honor, loved the latter more devotedly than he deserved. He understood why Huntington hated Barrie Benneston—Barrie Benneston who had usurped the identity of Battle.

Now it was as Barrie Benneston, not as Battle, that he leaned over the window-sill, and, as he looked for more means of descent to the garden below, called out again to the woman of love and of beauty, who awaited him:

"Edna! Edna! I am coming!"

Beside the window swung a long ladder of rope.

Benneston, for so he must be called for the time being, put out his hand and clutched this ladder. He drew it before the window, swung himself over the window ledge and descended quickly to the ground.

Edna came forward to meet him.

"Barrie!" she cried. "Barrie, dear Barrie! How Huntingdon does frighten me! He is becoming more infatuated with me that he persists in making love to me in the very presence of Blanche."

"The brute, Barrie.

"Worse—he is a madman."

"Oh!" she cried, "why is that?"

"Yes, yes. But just now Blanche upbraided him for the scene she showed him in telling me before her very face that he loved me, and fiercely he turned on her and cursed her.

"And, now," remarked Barrie, "she is clinging to him and weeping. Why don't she cast him off with scorn? That might bring him to his senses."

"Ah, Barrie, little you know the heart of a loving woman, how patient it is under affliction, how long it will love long-after-ing. Blanche is the truest of the true. She knows nothing of coquetry nor subterfuge. She loves madly and to her infinite sorrow.

"And she never blames you, Edna!"

"She knows that would be unjust. She knows that my devotion for her and for strains me from telling her often how I despise the man she loves and whoGod pity her and me—loves me."

"And she thinks his love for you is true."

"I believe that in his way he does love me, Barrie, but it is at the tiger-love curse. Bercely and with no thought of the inborn right of a woman to choose as a mate what man she will. He knows full well that I have chosen you, that you have pledged to Blanche; yet he respects Blanche's right, or rather, he rages, as lightly as he respects his own plighted word.

She drew Barrie's face down close to hers and kissed it passionately many times.

"Barrie," she said, "beware! Beware of the time in the hour of utter despair that soon must be his!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE BEST MAN WINS.

Scarcely had Edna Chelmsford voiced the warning which has just been worded, when she and Barrie Benneston were joined by Blanche Osbourne and Aubrey Huntingdown.

Huntingdon was in a bad mood, and it was evident that he was willing to quarrel with Benneston should opportunity present.

"Come away," whispered Edna, attempting to draw her lover away from the place. But Barrie was not one to flee from danger.

"It is my custom, Edna," he said, "to face my trouble, not to turn my back on them. If I must come to blows with Huntingdon, which Heaven forbid, it may as well happen today as at any future time. I am as well able to take my part and yours now as I ever shall be. I do not believe Huntingdon would worst me in fair fight."

"Perhaps not," answered Edna, still trying to lead him away, "but trouble may not be fought fair. His anger has been provoked by you and it may subside and then Huntingdon will be ashamed of the outrageous conduct of which he has been guilty today."

"Not he!" Barrie spoke in the most positive manner. "Besides, I owe it to you and to myself to take him to task for his brutal treatment of my betrothed wife. Edna, I am going to settle this matter with Huntingdon."

I beg of you, dear Barrie, do nothing hastily."

"Leave it to me; it is my affair."

Benneston turned toward where Clybourne, "Blanche," he said, "will you not go into the house with Edna? There is a matter that Aubrey and I must settle by ourselves."

"What can you mean?" And Blanche Clybourne's tears flowed afresh.

"Nothing to alarm you," said, curtly. "Benneston is right, there is something that must be settled once and forever between us. Go now, and leave us alone."

Reluctantly the two young women obeyed, and as soon as they were alone, Huntingdon and Benneston faced each other like knights of old.

"I suppose you consider that I have put you in the wrong," began Huntingdon, by declaring my love for Miss Chelmsford?"

"Yes."

"You shall have satisfaction."

"I must have it."

"Then to the fight?"

"With nature's weapons. We are both skilful with them."

The young women were not out of hearing of what Benneston said, and they attended into Hexter House deploring what was taking place and talking excitedly about the affair.

"What is that?" asked a beautiful old woman, with an ear trumpet, of one of the who could understand no conversation except that which was shouted.

As well as she could, Edna explained the affair to her, and when she listened the old lady's face grew dark.

And Barrie Benneston his venture too far when he dared to say he dared to challenge Aubrey Huntingdon! Fool that he was! Why, Huntingdon was the best shot certain?"

"Yes, if he does," exclaimed Edna, "he has demonstrated his courage by seeking the encounter. Besides, he is willing, if he will not suffer defeat, to meet any one who could understand no conversation except that which was shouted.

As well as she could, Edna explained the affair to her, and when she listened the old lady's face grew dark.

And Barrie Benneston his venture too far when he dared to say he dared to challenge Aubrey Huntingdon! Fool that he was! Why, Huntingdon was the best shot certain?"

"He told me that he loved me, Miss Ulverstone.

"But that was an honor."

"Not from Aubrey Huntingdon."

"Greater honor from Aubrey Huntingdon than from any other man lives," declared the old lady, adjusting her ear trumpet so as to be certain of getting Edna's words. "Aubrey Huntingdon is a man worth having, and he is worthy a more worthy woman than you, who would have wasted his affection or the one who wastes his affection on you."

Miss Ulverstone spoke with icy coolness that was in strong contrast to that of Edna Chelmsford, then to Blanche Clybourne.

"Suppose," Edna shot back so quickly that it seemed to Blanche that her cutting words preceded the thought which was prompted the words, "suppose that the man who thinks she loves when her heart is shriveled and cold? I can imagine Mr. Huntingdon laughing merrily at the mere thought of such a union—such an soulless and preposterous ghost of love!"

Blanche's pretty face became almost colorless, and there came into her still tearful eyes a look of fear. Edna Chelmsford's frightened Edna Chelmsford had she interpreted it aright.

Then the ear trumpet fell and dangled by its chain at her side, as if to indicate that conversation was at an end.

Then, speechless from anger, she went out of the room, and Edna arrived in time to see Huntingdon vanquished and fallen, not a supplicant, but a defeated foeman and that the latter was in a state of both that was both bitter and malevolent.

CHAPTER X.

A MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE.

Next day Huntingdon and Miss Ulverstone held a long conference in an arbor in a remote corner of the garden.

Late at midnight on the day after that conference, Benneston, whose name that Edna Chelmsford wished him to wait for her in the little room on the roof of the hall, the same in which Battle had had numerous strange experiences which have been referred to in this narrative.

As Benneston entered that room, Battle became self-conscious again and soon realized that he was sitting in the chair by the window in which he had gone to sleep two days before looking at Aubrey Huntingdon's conqueror, who sat in the chair in which Battle had sat—the mutilated and emasculated body of Benneston with its bandaged eyes and distorted face.

The bandages over Benneston's eyes brought that scene back to Battle vividly. The young detective heard some one approaching the door leading from the hall and quickly extricated himself by getting on the rope ladder outside the window and behind the curtain that hung before it.

As he did so, he noted with surprise that the iron shutter was not red but blue, and that the three bolts which were attached to it were not brass but iron, as he had first seen them.

Scarcely had he secured himself in this convenient place of concealment, when he could see everything that might transpire in that small but most interesting room. Then Miss Ulverstone entered and, scowling darkly at Benneston, who, because of the bandage over his eyes, could not see her, sat in the chair by the window.

Benneston spoke to Miss Ulverstone and received no reply. Then he got up and, because he could not see, shuffled across the room toward her.

She dodged him skilfully ,and while their little game of blindman's buff was in progress Battle saw Huntingdon enter the room and with a glance of triumph creep stealthily across the room and seat himself silently in the chair that Benneston had vacated.

Benneston went back to the chair, shuffling over the floor as he had done before, and as he found it, sat quite certain as to its location, chanced to touch Huntingdon's hand and recoiled as if stricken.

Huntingdon slid out of the chair and lay prone upon the floor to the wall.

Presently Miss Ulverstone signaled to him to arise and approach her, and when he stood before her she spoke in a long, keen dagger in his hand and whispered one word: "Now!"

Battle saw Huntingdon shuffle over to where Benneston should stand before him, the dagger poised for a fatal blow.

Then Benneston's hand dropped to his side. He stood a minute irresolute, then came back to Miss Ulverstone and laid the dagger in her hand.

"The man is blind," he whispered.

"All the better," she replied.

"He is helpless."

"Better for you," she answered.

"He is all unconscious."

"Another point in your favor," whispered Miss Ulverstone.

"It would be cowardly murder," breathed Huntingdon, "and I cannot do it. It was a fair fight. I was mad to listen to you."

Battle saw that Miss Ulverstone was white with rage and disappointment, but she did not try to restrain Huntingdon when he sprang through the window to the rope ladder.

Then she saw him coming and got up on the ladder, higher then the window and reached out and caught Huntingdon's hand, the latter had swung himself to the ground and disappeared in the house.

Then the young detective came back to his former position on the ladder and saw Miss Ulverstone shelter Benneston's dagger in her hand, and strike a fatal blow that Battle knew Benneston was unconscious of danger.

She stood a moment before him, smiling grimly at his ghastly aspect, then whispered:

"The bloodless love of an old flirt of seventy? There's blood for you, Miss Edna Chelmsford, and you'll see it when you're older than I am, if you live that long—but you won't learn what a woman is ever too old to love passionately!"

She said these awful words, and then touched some spring concealed in the wall and passed from the room through an opening made by a sliding panel.

Battle reentered the room and he stepped into the chair in which Miss Ulverstone had sat, the iron shutter closed instantly and silently.

Battle's eyes sought the dead form of Barrie Benneston in the chair at the opposite side of the room and saw it not.

It was gone!

Before he could voice his surprise, he felt the floor of the room ascending after the manner of an elevator.

Slowly the door and the blue, ironlocked, iron-studded door receded, and presently another door and a red, brass-locked, iron-shuttered window came into view.

Almost mechanically Battle moved the body from the window a little to one side. Then he stood on it and the shutter flew open, leaving him in the door.

But when he looked up, there was the open window and beyond it was the rope ladder.

He got out on the ladder and descended, and to a garden, that was filled with trees with old lumber, broken-down wagons of many kinds and pieces of scrap-iron, rags and debris.

In half an hour he was with Pibb.

"Now," said the Chief of Detectives, "I think we have solved that thirty years' mystery of the murder of Barrie Benneston—thanks first to you, Battle; secondly, to the ingenuity of one Hexter, now dead, once a wonderful electrical mechanic; and thirdly, perhaps, to ghosts, for you have always said people who say that house is haunted."

"I attribute much to a dream," said Battle. "I must have dreamed in that chair what I witnessed."

"A dream?" Bibb laughed. "And how do you think your dream and mine will believe me, Battle, there was something back of that dream that neither your philosophy nor mine can grasp. For years the only living occupant of that house has been a retired, tearful woman in mourning, who has looked after it in a way. Yet you saw her not."

Battle nodded.

"And your theory?" he questioned.

"Is before me—the guilt of Huntingdon, who was hanged—a terrible miscarriage of justice, as I believe now."

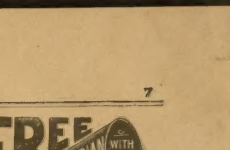
"Poor devil!"

(The end.)

Anything but That.

"The man I marry," said the beautiful maid with the sunset hair, "must be willing to go through fire and water for me."

"Then out the water," rejoined the gallant young man from Kentucky, "and I'll go you."



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A LAYMAN

Gave Doctor a Hint About Coffee.

Speaking of coffee a doctor of Decatur, Ills. says: "We used to analyze coffee at the Medical college and in spite of the laboratory tests which showed it to contain caffein, an active poison, I continued to use the drink, and later on found myself affected with serious stomach troubles, indigestion, headaches, etc.

The headaches came on so regularly and oppressed me so that I found it difficult to attend to my regular duties. One day last June, I met a friend whom I had known to be similarly afflicted. His marked improvement in appearance caused me to enquire what he had been doing. He announced that he had, some time ago, quit coffee and was using Postum Food Coffee, to this change he attributed the change in his health.

I took the hint, even from a layman, and made the same change myself. The first week I noticed a little difference but not much. The third week the change was almost magical. I have continued with the Postum and now my digestion is perfect, the nervous headaches have entirely disappeared, and I am well. My own analysis of the Postum Food Coffee shows it to be a pure food drink of strong character which is a marked contrast to the old fashioned coffee." Name given my Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Cautious.

Mrs. Fowler—How do you like my new hat? Mr. Fowler—What did it cost?—Somerville Journal.

Sheet Music Given Away.

The following songs are the latest hits of New York and Chicago. Finely printed on heavy paper, regular size, 11 inches wide by 14 inches long, words and music. You can have your choice of these four:

You Promised to Love Always.
When the Girl You Say's Yes, Sweetest Little Trooper in the Army.
Mamma's Little Angel Boy.
Miss Moody, Who's Your Man!
Who Will Care.
When Mammy Rocks Her Little One to sleep.
Polly, Be the Girl That Loves Her Mother.
Polly I Love Her Yes.
That Irish Lassie, Daughter Kate.
I Am Only a Poor Working Girl.
Grand Opera Waltz Revival and Two-Step Intermezzo.

For every yearly subscriber you send us for Woman's World, which is the best magazine published at a dollar price, enclosing 25 cents for same, we will mail you a choice of any two of the above pieces of sheet music absolutely free, postage paid. These pieces of music retail at 50 cents on the music stores each copy has handsomely lithographed colored covers and his full and complete words and music. This is a rare chance and may be had in limited offer. Be the first to send us with the latest hits. Address WOMAN'S WORLD, Music Dept., Chicago.

Of Course I Would.

Were I rich as a Croesus I
Know you what I would do—
I'd hunt me best endeavors and
Get quite as rich as two.

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Differentiations.

"Are you willing to be a candidate?"

"Of course I am," answered the great man. "But whether I am willing to announce that willingness is an altogether different matter."—Washington Star.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections; also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free to my fellow sufferers this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. Noyes, 820 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.

The Incumbent.

Mrs. Brown—You are President of your Sunshine Society, aren't you?

Mrs. Malaprop—Yes, I'm the present incumbrance.—Philadelphia Press.

BETTER THAN SPANKING.

Spanking does not cure children of bed wetting. If it did there would be few children that would do it. There is a constitutional cause for this. Mrs. H. Summers, Box 224, Notre Dame, Ind., will send free to mothers of any useless, who asks to money. Write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child. Therefore are it can't help it.

Old Friends.

Barker—Come over here, old man. I want to introduce you to my wife.

Parker—Oh, I know Mrs. Barker already. We were engaged for three months in the summer of 1901.—Somerville Journal.

A Fine Kidney Remedy.

Mr. A. S. Hitchcock, East Hampton, Conn. (The Clothier) says if any sufferer from Kidney and Bladder Troubles will write him he will direct them to the perfect home cure he uses. He makes no charge whatever for the favor.

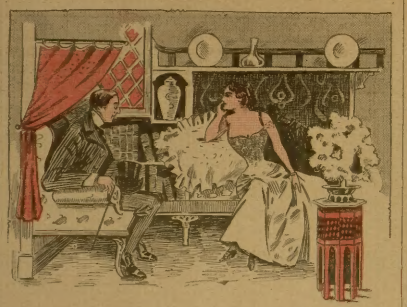
For Quick Changes.

This weather makes us yearn to note
Some great inventive man
Who'll make a winter overcoat
That folds up as a fan.
—Philadelphia Press.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation allays pain, cures wind colic. 25 cents a bottle.

SOME JOKES

A NARROW ESCAPE.



"But," mused the fair young thing, "I cannot understand why you said 'Thank you' when I told you I could not marry you."

"Oh," explained the youth, who was endowed with a certain percentage of reasoning power, "I really felt grateful to you for making it unnecessary for me to interview your father on the subject. I happen to know of the experience of some others."

A Sordid Sentiment.

I care not for the violets nor the roses blooming fair;
I care not for the song birds that will carol anywhere;
I care not for the fleecy clouds that high above us roll;
But I'm waiting for the summer when we don't use coal!

I have no great affection for the butterflies and bees,
And no special predilection for the sighing of the breeze;
But I'm waiting for the June time with an all-important soul,
For the radiant, restful summer, when we don't use coal!

—Washington Star.

Verified.

Myrtilla in her evening gown
Is quite a dazzling sight to see;
A pair of shoulders most superb
And white as driven snow.
I know the simile is true,
For when I crept to kiss
As to confess my love, I found
The shoulder icy cold.

—New York Times.

Following Orders.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—Here, Bridget, see how dusty it is under the bed.

Bridget—Yes'm.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—Haven't I impressed upon you that you must sweep under the beds?

Bridget—Ax coorse, ma'am, an' how could the dust get there if I hadn't swept it under?—Philadelphia Press.

Study in Heartbreakings.

"I am supposed to die of a broken heart," said the unimaginable actress. "Now, how am I to know how a person with a broken heart behaves?"

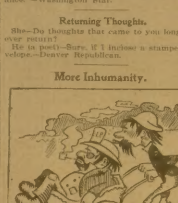
"I'll tell you what to do," answered the cold-blooded manager. "You study the author of this play after he sees your first performance."—Washington Star.

Returning Thoughts.

She—Do thoughts that came to you long ago ever return?

He is poet—Sure, if I inclose a stamped envelope.—Denver Republican.

More Inhumanity.



Rusty Raglan—Why did youse refuse ter eat up at dat kind lady's house, Hen?

Haughty Henry—Why, de crool woman set de coffee on top o' de grine-stone an' invited me to have er seat on de sawbuck, an right in front o' me stood de ax.

His Word.

He—Darling, do you think your father will ever forgive me for eloping with you?

She—He said he would.

Getting Even.

"Where are you going to send that letter, Uncle Remus?"

"I'm de Philippines, sah."

"Do you know any one there?"

"No, sah, but Ah wants to get even wid de guinament. Dey chahge two cents to send a letuh one square, an de same to de Philippines. An'll get mah money's wuff out ob de one."—Chicago News.

A Washingtonian Bargain.

Martha Washington was twitting George because she was on a dollar bill, whereas he was only on the two-cent stamps.

"But if I was taken at par you would be reduced to ninety-eight," he retorted.

Seeing she was a bargain in any event, she kept silence, while he swiped notes from a prima donna's speech for his Farewell Address.

Romantic.

She is engaged, oh, lovely maid!
What raptures thrill us through!
What happiness lurks in your word!
What hopes are fixed on you!
We pledge our lives to see your wish,
'Twill surely make a stir!
This pearl of girls who is engaged
To cook at fifteen per!

Had Been Watching Him.

"But, papa," protested the beautiful-eyed young maiden, "you are unjust to Algernon. He has no bad habits."

But, oh! I think I'd rather be—it makes me blush to tell it!—

The envy of the universe and not compelled to tell it!

Preference.

I'd like to be a millionaire, and feel that I could buy
Most anything 'most anywhere from ocean's depths to sky;
But, oh! I think I'd rather be—it makes me blush to tell it!—
The envy of the universe and not compelled to tell it!

NOT A WHOLE ONE.

She—Ain't your little sister very small for her age?

He—She's just er half sister.

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AND JOLLITY

Knew the Sex.

Wederly—My wife owes her dressmaker a little bill. I must stop in and pay it this morning.

Singleton—Why don't you give your wife the money and let her pay it?

Wederly—Not much! She would order another dress.

A Busy Man.

"Come back here, and I'll lick ye."

"Ain't got time. I got an engagement to git licked by Fitty Jones."

Pointed Paragraphs.

One-sided quarrels never last long.

Well-bred people are not always of the upper crust.

A man seldom realizes how much he can't do until he tries.

Automobiles and launching parties travel at a break-neck pace.

Sincere is the only road on the map that leads to prosperity.

If women talked the change that is coming to you might talk back.

The wise man enjoys the little he has while the fool is seeking for more.

Worked Both Ways.

"That sermon," remarked the parson after the benediction had been pronounced, "was the result of great mental effort on my part. It's a preparation kept me awake nearly two-thirds of the night."

"Queer what contrary effects a sermon will have on people," replied the old deacon, "I observed that the delivery of the one you speak of put nearly two-thirds of the congregation to sleep."

Turned to Account.

"He's making money selling a very clever little paper weight."

"What is it?"

"Why, it's a striking imitation of a tea biscuit, looks for all the world like the real thing."

"It is the real thing. His wife makes them."—Philadelphia Press.

His Judgment.

"Still," said the man who always has time for an argument, "you must confess that your judgment is sometimes at fault."

"Mighty seldom," answered Senator Sorghum; "mighty seldom. I haven't gone into a scheme for many a day that I didn't get money out of one way or another."—Washington Star.

The Difficulty of It.

Rev. Goodman—Really, it's no easy to tell the truth as a fib.

Gaymin—But it isn't so restful. If I had told my wife the last night when she asked me what kept me out so late I wouldn't have got a wink of sleep.—Philadelphia Press.

Why He Used a Hatchet.

George Washington had just cut down the cherry tree.

"But why," asked the father, "did you do it with your little hatchet?"

"Because," replied the youngster, "I didn't have any ax to grind.

Mightily pleased at the astute answer, the old man predicted that such foresight would make his boy President.

Caesar and Chicago.

Caesar, having remarked that the die was cast, put the Rubicon behind him.

"That was lucky," exclaimed the conqueror. "If it had been the Chicago River I would never have had the nerve to cross it."

His campaign against Verdigacteris, however, proved that he had some Gaul, anyway.

Cause for Worry.

Husband—I'm greatly worried on account of debt.

Wife—Why, dear, I wasn't aware that you owed anything.

Husband—I don't; and if I did I wouldn't let it worry me. It's the debts that I am unable to collect that keep me awake nights.

A Natural Mistake.

"Good gracious, Henry!" exclaimed the wife of the absent-minded man, "why are you eating that dog biscuit?"

"Dog biscuit!" replied the absent-minded man. "I thought it was some new breakfast food that we hadn't tried."—Philadelphia Record.

Straight Goods.

Mrs. Jagsby—My husband told the truth for once when he came home at 2 o'clock the other morning and I asked him where he had been.

Mrs. Mixem—Indeed! What did he say?

Mrs. Jagsby—He said he didn't know.

Somewhat Different.

Dix—Just heard of your engagement, old man. Allow me to congratulate you.

Dix—Your information is a little stale, I'm married now.

Hix—Oh, I beg your pardon. You have my sympathy.

The Promptings of Affection.

"Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins; "I am going to learn to play poker."

"What for?"

"So that I can do as a wife ought and intelligently sympathize with you in all your troubles."—Washington Star.

Letting Him Down.

Borem—I'm sure your father doesn't like me, although he's always very polite and all that.

Miss Koy—Ah, yes, that's just like papa; everybody says I take after him, you know.—Philadelphia Press.

Hadn't Heard of It.

"I want to marry your daughter, sir."

"Go to the devil!"

"I didn't know that the devil had a daughter."

Miss Kidder—Ah, Mr. Swiftly, they tell sad stories of you.

Mr. Swiftly—Indeed? What are they?

Miss Kidder—They say that after the last annual banquet of your alumni association you could not find the keyhole when you went home.

Mr. Swiftly—Keyhole? My dear lady, that is a canard. The truth of the matter is I could not find the—

Miss Kidder—The door?

Mr. Swiftly—No; the house.

No Chance to Forget.

"Here's an account of a man who was cast away on a desert island for sixteen years, and when taken off could speak the language just as well as the day he landed."

"I wonder why he didn't forget it?"

"His wife was with him."

Dealing in Futures.

Bernstein—Rebecca, ledt's get married ride away, unickly.

Miss Goldstine—Vy vos you in such a hurry already?

Bernstein—Der sooner ve ged ved der sooner comes de golden wedding.

Ioux.

There once was a frolicsome Sioux,
Whose didn't know just what ioux doux
So he went for a walk
With his gay tomahawk,
And proceeded ioux turn the air bloux.

Down on Tobacco.

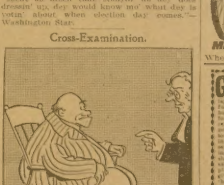
Ella—Fred kissed me last night, and I know he had been using tobacco.

Stella—No man can kiss me who has a smoking compartment in his face.

Uncle Eben's Philosophy.

"If some young man," said Uncle Eben, "starts on a well time, workin' an' doin' an' dressin' up, dey would know mo' what dey is totin' about when election day comes."—Washington Star.

Cross-Examination.



Lawyer—What is your business?

Witness—I am a conductor.

Lawyer—Railway, musical or lightning?

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PITTSBURGH EGG SEPARATOR
It separates the whites of the eggs from the yolks without breaking the yolk. Necessary in all cooking where eggs are used. No kitchen complete without one. Price only 10c. by sample.
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GET BIG MAIL Would you like to get lots of mail? If so, send your name and address to us at once. We will send it to you promptly. You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses and jobbers are constantly sending out circulars, catalogues and other advertising matter, in the hope of securing customers and increasing business. We get all this matter and more, too, and we will put your name in the hands of those who will be glad to get your mail. Our mailing names and addresses are all up-to-date, carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We have many names on our books that are not to be found elsewhere. We receive new additions for great numbers to send advertising matter to. We have a system of checking and keeping track of names and taking care of them in such a way that we can sell 10 names at one time or a million. Write your name very plainly on the coupon, and make a memorandum of what you want, your street number and town, also, plainly written, in the space provided. Then send it to us, and we will send you by return mail, postage prepaid, a list of names and addresses of the classes you want, with your name inserted in our agent's directory. Don't wait. Do it now. Write your name and address plainly, so we can understand it. Address,
AGENTS' NAME AND ADDRESS BUREAU, Indian Creek, Pa.
Please send me lots of mail. Name ..... Address .....

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Children.

BY IDA GOLDSMITH MORRIS.

The sleeping echoes of her quiet room
Are never waked by bursts of childish glee,
And up the polished staircase never come
Light patterings of footstep swift and free.

Alone she sits and in the twilight gloom
Dreams happily of what shall never be!

Sometimes her wistful fancy strews the floor
(Rich carpeted and neat) with broken toys;
Paints finger prints on window glass and door,
Hears echoes of shrill laughter and rude noise;
All that a tired mother might deplore,
Would seem to her starved heart as priceless joys!

Till, from the world without, some sudden note
Of childish voice, through her vision rings,
And sobs of anguish rise to her white throat,
Round it which no dimpled arm in mischief clings;
Gone are the sweet dream-fancies, as may float
From earth to heaven the flash of angel wings.

And yet, no little empty crib is there
To mock the mother arms, outstretched in vain;
No hands
No shining tresses of silken hair,
No tiny grave where buried hopes lie stain;
Only the deeper loss she has to bear
Upon whose heart no babe of hers has lain.

Pleasant Paragraphs.

REGARD FOR APPEARANCES.

Mr. Brickrow (at the opera)—Goodness me! You've stuffed your ears with cotton.

Mrs. Brickrow—Hush! That's so I won't get interested in the music and don't want people to think I am not used to good society.

SHE TOLD HIM.

Husband—One of your New Year's resolutions made that you would not quarrel with me for a year.

Wife—Yes.

"Well, you are snapping at me half the time already."

"So!"

"I should just like to know what's become of your good resolution."

"You would, eh? Well, I wanted mother to see them, and so I inclosed them in a letter to her, and she'll write to you to-night, and she writes me that she never received it. That's what's become of it."

STRUCK A BONANZA.

Mouldy Mike—I've struck a soft thing now.

Dusty Dan—What's that?

Mouldy Mike—I go inter a town, an' tell 'em I belong to a stranded opery company, and want 'em all to be at th' schoolhouse at seven sharp, and have 'em give a concert. They always come. A free show draws a crowd every time. Well, I don't git more'n halfway through me best solo, 'Mister Dooley,' than they begin to throw eggs an' cabbages an' all sorts o' garden produce by the bushel. I just gathers it up and start out the next door. Been livin' like a fightin' cock all winter.

KNEW THE BROTHER.

Struggling Artist—Brother Skindint intends to give our new chapel a beautiful memorial window.

Wife—He probably wants something to look at when the contribution box goes around.

HAD THOUGHT IT OVER.

Agitator—Do you ever stop to reflect, sir, on the condition of the unfortunate?

Citizen—I have thought much upon the subject. I thought long and deeply.

Agitator—Ah, I am glad to find there is one heaven myself who has given this grave subject attention. What, in your opinion, does this country most need at the present time.

Citizen—A footkiller.

FATE YOUR CHOICE.

Student—What is pessimism?

Philosopher—The faith of cowards.

Student—Then what is optimism?

Philosopher—The faith of fools.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

Citizen (with poor memory)—I should like the present address of the Hon. Mr. Greatmind.

Newspaper Office Boy—Next door to th' right.

Citizen—Thank you. For whom shall I inquire?

Newspaper Office Boy—Th' obituary editor.

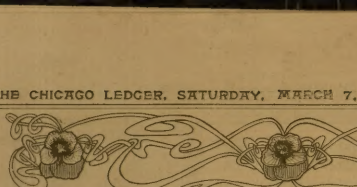
NOT INTERESTED.

First Citizen—There is to be a big meeting tonight, a great outpouring of the masses to devise ways and means to reform the city government, so that its affairs may be administered with strict economy. Come along.

Second Citizen—Un-h'd rather not. Fact is, I am already reformed myself.

Paid to Go to Church.

Those who are asking and trying to answer the question, "Why are our churches empty?" will be interested to learn how the problem is solved in the village of Hunton. There the poorer villagers are attracted to church by a competition for pecuniary rewards. By the will of Bishop Porteus, who died about a hundred years ago, the interest on certain bonds is divided annually among six poor cottagers at Hunton who attend Divine services the most regularly. The competition gets more keen every year. In fact, it pays very well to attend, the remuneration coming out at nearly 25 cents per service, or rather over 42 cents a Sunday. This year $122 was distributed among six villagers, two of whom were widows. Twelve Portens was rector of Hunton from 1765 to 1787 and afterward Bishop of London.



THE SIGNET RING;

Or,

Love and Knighthood in the Black Hills.

By Annie L. Smith, Author of "Cuba's Dark Secrets," "Oath Bound," Etc

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Begun in No. 8, Jan. 31. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVI.

A BLIND TRAIL.

Leaving Gerald Butterfield and half a dozen pioneers to their lonely vigil in the little cabin, Gerald Hethrington mounted and rode away, soon leaving the lights of the town and taking his way along the lonely road leading to Falconer's dwelling.

There was a strange presentiment of coming peril weighing on his heart, an oppression that he had never experienced.

There were prowling Indians lurking near. Would they venture to attack Falconer? Ia was sufficiently isolated to warrant such a fear. Had Ione learned of the fearful tragedy, or was she yet in ignorance? If so, she would assuredly keep the secret.

Presently the lights in the streets glimmered in the distance, and he struck into the still grassy road leading northward upon the mountain slope. He was spurring his horse forward at a rapid pace, and suddenly Black Prince snorted, reared and wheeled.

A dark object darted like a serpent through the air, settled in a coil about the rider's neck, and, in an instant, he was hurled from the saddle.

With a neigh of affright Black Prince dashed away on the road leading to the camp.

Strangling and helpless, the young Captain felt himself drawn over the ground and through the dense growth of bushes, and the horsehair lasso about his throat relaxed. He was dragged by weight resting upon a flat stone near at hand. In the lurid firelight he saw a rough representation of one of the pictures from Dante's Inferno, the grim circle of rocks in the background, in front the black shadows beyond the dense forest, and looming up between was the lurid light of the campfire, flickering fantastically over the half-nude forms and hideously painted faces of warriors dancing to their gleaming eyes and contorted visages.

Presently a tall, lithe warrior left the circle and approached the spot of shadow wherein the prisoner lay. With great presence of mind Gerald resigned himself to strangling insensibility, but the savage was not to be easily deceived. Approaching, he administered a heavy kick full upon the ribs, and, by letting his lungs with air and holding his breath, with the muscles of his chest set tensely, the young Captain escaped the terrible, crushing blow without the movement of a muscle to betray that he was conscious.

"Wagh!" grunted the brute, and walking away he returned to place beside the campfire.

His fate was evidently not to be decided at that time, for although occasionally some fierce exclamation reached his ears in the Indian tongue, no further movement was held, while the orgies continued, waxing fast and furious.

Left to himself, Gerald pondered miserably over his fate. Escape seemed scarcely be more desperate. He had faced death upon the battlefield a score of times, often when the chances were all in favor of whelming. To fall with his comrades around him, to die gloriously a soldier's death he would not shrink from with such fortitude as he could command, but these Sioux, he felt assured that release from captivity could only come through a lingering death of torture, and he was not sufficient to appall the stoutest heart. And governing all was the dread of his own probable doom, was his anxiety for Ione. She had vanished from his sight, and who would she ever know his fate, and, should he die a slow death by torture, did he wish it? No—better that she should remain in ignorance. How could he leave her in the power of the wretch who claimed her as a child? Who would protect her and her grandmother from the horrors of Indian slavery in which they were held? The thought was terrible, and he had but a few hours to live. Indeed, he felt sure that he soon be his wife. He looked upward, scanning the sky above where the round moon had obscured the bright disk of the moon and blotted out the stars. Was it ominous of the fate that was about to overtake him?

Then he turned his gaze toward the group around the fire. Half a dozen had already succumbed to the potent whisky and lay at full length upon the earth, drunken dead, but not entirely helpless, crouched upon their haunches, staring stupidly at the bright blaze, while the remainder had been undisturbed, but his weapons were gone—tomahawk, pistols, sword. His arms were pinioned at the elbows with stout thongs and were pained him exceedingly, as both from the cramped position and from the tightness of the ligatures. Wondering that his clothing had not been stripped from his body, he groped for an inner pocket of his waistcoat, and, to his relief, discovered that a third revolver was in its place.

His lips were dry and parched, his tongue swollen, and half expecting that his waistcoat pocket had been rifled of its contents, he slipped his benumbed fingers therein, and, to his great delight found the little package of snake root he usually carried with him. Unnoticed, his watch, chain and fob had disappeared, but his fingers came in contact with a circular bit of metal—the sinister ring which he had placed in the pocket and which had remained there in the struggle, unnoticed, in fact.

One by one the howling savages ceased their gyrations and dashed beside the insensible companions until but two remained sitting erect, upon their feet, with their backs propped against the trunks of saplings, nodded occasionally, starting up at intervals to yell and whoop, and then looked toward the spot where their prisoner lay.

Slowly dragged the tedious hours. The wind rose, chill and keen, but at length, utterly exhausted, Gerald slept.

When he awoke the gray, misty light was stealing over the earth and he could barely lay low, seeming almost to meet the crest of towering pines. The campfire had died out, while the clouds of smoke about the tepees told that the inmates were busily ravenously devouring their morning meal.

It was soon finished, and one of the party approached the captive, bearing a morsel of dried fish and a brown earthen flask filled with water, which he set to his lips.

Loathing the food, Gerald was at first tempted to refuse, but reflecting that only by keeping his strength could he possibly be prepared to avail himself of an opportunity to escape, he hastily swallowed the unpalatable meal, and drank the water greedily.

The animals were brought in from the grassy ground where they had been pastured, Gerald was compelled to mount a fiery, evil-eyed pony, and, surrounded by the ferocious warriors, he dashed forward with his captors. On across the plain they sped, a fierce gallop, then a gentle canter, then, at the heart of the hills, opening fan-like upon the level floor, where bluffs rose suddenly to a height of fifty feet, from thence the ground rose in heights land against the gray clouds in the background.

The party was following a blind trail which would have appeared invisible to perfectly acquainted, at length reaching the bank of a stream, which they forded, the animals sinking nearly to the saddle girths in the icy, swirling waters, doubling around huge boulders and leaping over fallen tree trunks. Occasionally the prisoner noticed a few drops of the red fluid that shut them in like a vast prison. Suddenly they came to a halt. In front of was the creek, too broad and rapid to be forded or leaped, while there was also a perpendicular rock rising sheer one hundred feet. But, turning abruptly, the leader of the party entered the creek, which was a narrow ledge running along the face of the cliff.

Once or twice Gerald looked up, his heart beating fast lest a rescuing party beside might slip and plunge into the stream fourteen hundred feet below. Presently they reached the thick mass of moss on an overhanging rock, projecting fully twenty feet, the ledge here was widened to allow three horsement to ride abreast, formed of a dense, matted growth, whose stalactites which had at some former period crumbled from the overhanging ledge. On the sides were splinters of rock, as if detachment, as if being pushed by the superabundant growth.

Passing from beneath the friendly shelter, Gerald beheld the thick mass of moss overhanging rock, projecting fully twenty feet, the ledge here was widened to allow three horsement to ride abreast, formed of a dense, matted growth, whose stalactites which had at some former period crumbled from the overhanging ledge. On the sides were splinters of rock, as if detachment, as if being pushed by the superabundant growth.

Passing from beneath the friendly shelter, Gerald beheld the thick mass of overhanging moss towering a hundred feet, shuddering at the thought of what the fall must be should the foundations of the tremendous mass give way. Nearly opposite to this rock of moss, the ledge was lost in a recess in the gorge widened slightly, and here a great deal of decomposed vegetable matter covered anything he had ever beheld.

About three acres of ground the area scooped from the wall, covered with roots of all sizes and forms, thrown together in the utmost confusion, and covered with fallen timber lying in every direction. The impression produced upon his mind was of some enormous manufactory suddenly closed down by a tremendous volcanic explosion, and just at this point the stream was bridged by a gigantic slab of granite. In the midst of this chaos he descried an Indian encampment.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SECOND TORQUEMADA.

An Indian encampment within that wild nook where the foot of the white man might not penetrate, hidden away in the heart of grim walls of granite and sandstone, bristling with gnarled pines, the growth of a century, a fastness where a handful of warriors might successfully defy an army, unless surprised, and yet within striking distance of the already populous settlements, Deadwood, Crook City and Central City.

It was but the bivouac of a war party, Gerald saw that at a glance, and under the personal leadership of some great war chief.

But a single tepee was in sight, a commodious lodge, sufficiently large to accommodate a war council, and covered with dressed buffalo hides elaborately painted in hieroglyphics, and bearing the totem of its owner, the head of a deer with widespreading horns and branched jaws, in place of the usual lodges while on a migration, buffalo skins were stretched across poles and boughs in the shape or platforms lightly laid with branches of fir and spruce to serve as shelter from storm, or the fervid rays of the midday sun.

Fully fifty warriors were lounging idly beneath the trees, or engaged in fishing upon the bank of the stream. Not a squaw was in sight, with a passing note, save the hideously-painted bucks, not even the usual complement of savage dogs attendant upon a migratory band on their excursions across the country.

At the lower end of the amphitheater a dozen horned cattle were corralled, with fifty or sixty head of horses, a fine stock, evidently the booty of a recent raid, and among the latter Captain Hethrington recognized Black Prince.

The recognition was mutual; the animal neighed loudly in welcome, striving in vain to part the horsehair lasso which held him fast.

As the party crossed the natural bridge the native Indians gazed curiously upon him, but silent, every savage, unpitying eye scanning the prisoner from head to foot. With true Indian stoicism the warriors awaited the fitting moment for any display of emotion, and, like a r

regions, rather than the head of a human being.

Gerald turned from the contemplation of his ferocious jailer. His bodily suffering was intense, for the thongs still confining his arms were cutting into the flesh, and it was by the utmost effort of the will that he controlled himself sufficiently to repress the groans that rose to his throat. It would be but music to the savage horde could they listen to a shriek of agony, and, setting his teeth hard, the young Captain bore the torture in silence.

The air had grown oppressive, hot, stifling, the precursor of a summer storm in the mountains, but the wretched captive took no heed. Once or twice he essayed to pray, but his whispered utterances were but the vagaries of a mind distraught.

Suddenly a sound attracted his attention—a low moan near at hand, from beyond the shrouding curtain, and that a woman's lips uttered the feeble cry he felt assured. For a moment he forgot his own suffering, knew he had assumed was a prisoner, and listened intently, but the sound was not repeated, and, fearing he might bring down summary vengeance upon the unfortunate, whoever she might be, he remained silent.

Presently he became aware that something unusual was occurring outside the lodge. He listened attentively, and even the unimpressed ear could tell by the sounds, by curiosity overcoming his stolidity, and peered from the entrance.

A diabolical whoop rent the air, a fiendish shout which was duplicated by the guard, who turned and glared ferociously at the prisoner. There was a hurried trampling of feet, the hide serving as a door was pushed aside, and Paul Fernald, in Indian costume, stood before him.

But for an instant Captain Hethrington forgot his attire—only the face of a white man whom he believed to be a prisoner like himself, and looked with compassion upon the one who had been his companion for.

The evil smile upon Fernald's thin lips disabused him, and the pitying gaze turned to a look of horror and deepest loathing.

All the malignant nature was embodied and concentrated in the expression upon that countenance.

"And so, Captain Hethrington, of Troop D, U. S. A., we have met again," sneered the wretch, his eyes glittering like a serpent's, "and now in my power—your doom is sealed—there's no exchange of cards, or coffee and pistols for two; yonder the stake is planted, my very good friend, Lame Deer, will thank me for furnishing amusement for the warriors the next hour—possibly two, if your physical strength is more than the mean of time—according to the vitality you possess my friend. As braves will send you to the regions of Pluto already seasoned, so you'll not realize the difference in climate—considered, I know your nerves, as it is!" And as a tall chief entered the tepee, "allow me to present Lame Deer, the renowned war chief of the Minnecoujous—Captain Hethrington, A 1 Yankee. I believe I have quoted correctly," turning to Gerald.

"Wash!" grunted the hideously-painted chief, and Deer glided across—white—the chief great warrior—burn long time—not cry like squaw."

"Wretch! Monster! Fiend!" cried Gerald, his head thrusting, and for one of his bonds, he turned to the renegade, his fine form drawn to its full stature. "Monster, to compare me to squaws—I demand it without your instigation that I was made a captive."

"Precisely," returned Fernald, "and now I intend to be perfect in every execution. I hate you with an intensity that only a lingering death by torture can appease. To-night the fatal lone will be my reflex—but by the rites of Church or State, but an Indian form merely by being brought to my wigwam—fortunately nothing more is needed to constitute your red friends. I loved her, now that love is turned to bitter hate. She is in my power—a prisoner like yourself, with no power in heaven, on earth or in the infernal pit can save her.

"Traitor! Coward!" Lia shouted Gerald fiercely. "Jone Falconer is—"

He interrupted the renegade, pointing an index finger toward the shrouding curtain. "Here, Iron-hoof," turning to the chief, "take this friend of mine."

With a grunt of satisfaction the powerful savage caught the arm of the prisoner, pushing him violently through the opening and dragging him into the space for several yards.

"I engage addressed a few words to the savage, who bounded back and disappeared within the lodge.

"If I doubt my assertion," said Fernald.

Gerald turned his head, and the last spark of hope fled.

Standing just outside the tepee was his betrothed by her side a rude spear. Her foot upon her arm, was Iron-hoof, his right hand poising a tomahawk over her head.

Gerald could see that her face was marble white, her eyes fixed in a horrified stare; she stood as if petrified, powerless to move, to utter a sound, so silent, so motionless as she resembled a statue of Despair rather than a living woman.

The renegade folded his arms and fixed his basilisk eyes upon his rival's face, all the bitter hatred revealed in that gaze through which a fiend only peered.

"You perceive, my valiant Captain, that I have game in my own hands," he mocked. "What a pity, for your own sake, that you had the bad taste to cross Paul Fernald in love—you must pay the penalty, for your fate is to die—a lingering death by fire. Such torture as only my redskins know how to inflict, scientifically."

He paused, awaiting a response, but Gerald stood gazing at him in such undisguised horror that even the demon-hearted ruffian quailed. But, recovering himself on the instant, he resumed his cold-blooded manner.

"Glory as much as you like, my fine fellow. If glances had the power to kill, I should fall dead, I am quite certain, but under the present aspect of affairs I rather enjoy the situation. Once I envied you the love you had stolen from me, now I value that love as lightly as I do your black, withering glances. I would have made her my wife—now that boon is denied her, she shall be my slave. She spurned my honorable affection, she insulted me, and cheated—dashing Captain Hethrington. The—Well, you are not love about it, are you?" Black and blue."

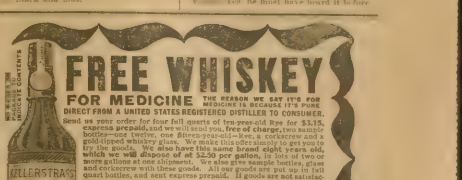
Local Color.

"Oh, dear, I shall never learn to skate."

Saw the Point.

Dalton—How that English chap did laugh at your—

Yes—he must have heard it before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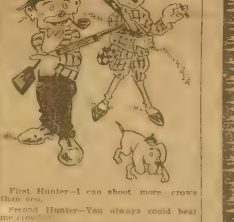

First Hunter—I can shoot more crows than you.

Second Hunter—You always could beat me crow.

"Did you see papa today almut our engagement?"

Yes. I saw him at his office.

"Were you there long?"

"Oh, no; I came out almost as soon as I went in.

LUCKY "7" PUZZLE

$1000 TO OUR LUCKY READERS FREE!

In the square below are a lot of figure 7s. They are all jumbled up and mixed together so that they are hard to count. The idea of the puzzle is to count the number of figures in the square. Every reader of this paper has a chance to win a prize. We have decided to give premiums to the exact number, but we not only give prizes to the person who counts correctly but also to 1126 others who come nearest to the correct number. With the number of thousands of readers who answers this offer has a chance to get a prize. The person who counts the exact number of figures will receive $200 in cash. The person who comes next nearest will get $100 in cash. The third nearest will get $50 in cash, the fourth nearest will get $25 in cash, and the next 1000 nearest will be entered to count them correctly. The nearest correct guesses will receive $1 each.

In case two or more persons are tied for any one of the prizes, each will receive the full amount of the prize they are tied for. In case of a tie between two persons for the $200 prize, each will receive $100. In case of a tie between three persons for the $100 prize, each will receive $50, and so on. In case of a tie between more than 1126 persons, each will receive $1.

The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD, a paid circulation of $1,000,000 guarantee that the largest, prettiest, most valuable, most costly offer ever made in a newspaper or magazine will be made in connection with the above puzzle. Every person who answers this puzzle correctly will receive a prize. The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD are doing business with the readers of this paper, and they want to show their appreciation of their patronage. WOMAN'S WORLD is already a favorite with you, but they want to make it more than ever so. Therefore, this offer is made. WOMAN'S WORLD is only 25 cents a year. Special subscription blanks are printed on back paper particularly adapted to this puzzle. It has a lot of information, stories, articles, fashions, fancy work, cooking recipes, and splendid illustrations. Remember that as soon as you send in your answer to this puzzle you will receive a letter telling you whether you have won a prize or not. Don't delay, but send your answer at once. Don't miss the opportunity of your life. Don't fail to take advantage of this world famous offer.

HOW MANY FIGURES IN THIS SQUARE?

If you want to secure a subscription, which entitles you to a prize, enclose 25 cents in the coupon and you need not count the figures in the square. If you send 25 cents you will get four year's subscription to WOMAN'S WORLD, and you will be entered to count the figures in the square and receive one prize. If you send 50 cents you will get four year's subscription and one count. 50 cents entitles you to four year's subscription and four counts. Each subscription will be added to your present subscription. You can also renew your subscription and receive your number of chances to win prizes.

Each person will be allowed to count as many times as he or she pays for according to the offer.

CONDITIONS. Each person receiving a prize must agree to allow the publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD to publish his or her name, address and prize won in the event of his or her being awarded a prize. No person employed by the WOMAN'S WORLD or by any member of the firm of Chicago is allowed to compete for the prizes. No one knows the number of figures in the square. The count will not be made until the first of June to give all readers time to count. The count will be made by a committee and the correct answer will be given. Then all the counts sent in by subscribers will be compared and the prizes awarded. Duplicate prizes and money will be sent as soon as possible. Remember that it takes some time to properly enter subscriptions, and to make sure that your subscription is entered in time to count, you should send in your subscription at once. It will be entered after they are received up to March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get better. Counts must be in our office before 5 p. m., March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get four subscriptions and four counts. If you send 75 cents you will get six subscriptions and six counts. If you send 25 cents you will get one subscription and one count. 50 cents entitles you to four year's subscription and four counts. Each subscription will be added to your present subscription. The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD are responsible parties and will positively award the prizes as stated in this offer. Every person who answers this puzzle correctly will be entered to count the figures in the square. Each person will be allowed to count as many times as he or she pays for according to the offer. Each person receiving a prize must agree to allow the publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD to publish his or her name, address and prize won in the event of his or her being awarded a prize. No person employed by the WOMAN'S WORLD or by any member of the firm of Chicago is allowed to compete for the prizes. No one knows the number of figures in the square. The count will not be made until the first of June to give all readers time to count. The count will be made by a committee and the correct answer will be given. Then all the counts sent in by subscribers will be compared and the prizes awarded. Duplicate prizes and money will be sent as soon as possible. Remember that it takes some time to properly enter subscriptions, and to make sure that your subscription is entered in time to count, you should send in your subscription at once. It will be entered after they are received up to March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get better. Counts must be in our office before 5 p. m., March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get four subscriptions and four counts. If you send 75 cents you will get six subscriptions and six counts. If you send 25 cents you will get one subscription and one count. 50 cents entitles you to four year's subscription and four counts. Each subscription will be added to your present subscription. The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD are responsible parties and will positively award the prizes as stated in this offer. Every person who answers this puzzle correctly will be entered to count the figures in the square. Each person will be allowed to count as many times as he or she pays for according to the offer. Each person receiving a prize must agree to allow the publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD to publish his or her name, address and prize won in the event of his or her being awarded a prize. No person employed by the WOMAN'S WORLD or by any member of the firm of Chicago is allowed to compete for the prizes. No one knows the number of figures in the square. The count will not be made until the first of June to give all readers time to count. The count will be made by a committee and the correct answer will be given. Then all the counts sent in by subscribers will be compared and the prizes awarded. Duplicate prizes and money will be sent as soon as possible. Remember that it takes some time to properly enter subscriptions, and to make sure that your subscription is entered in time to count, you should send in your subscription at once. It will be entered after they are received up to March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get better. Counts must be in our office before 5 p. m., March 31st, 1903. If you send 50 cents you will get four subscriptions and four counts. If you send 75 cents you will get six subscriptions and six counts. If you send 25 cents you will get one subscription and one count. 50 cents entitles you to four year's subscription and four counts. Each subscription will be added to your present subscription. The publishers of WOMAN'S WORLD are responsible parties and will positively award the prizes as stated in this offer. Every person who answers this puzzle correctly will be entered to count the figures in the square. Each person will be allowed to count as many times as he or she pays for according to the offer.

HERE ARE THE PRIZES

Each person answering this contest must fill in the blank below and state the number of figures in the square.

1 Prize for correct answer - - - -	$ 200
1 Prize for nearest correct answer - -	100
1 Prize next nearest	50
1 Prize next nearest	25
1 Prize next nearest	10
120 Prizes next nearest $1 each - - - -	120
1000 Prizes of presents, average value each 50 cents - -	500
1126 Prizes amount to	$1000

In case two or more persons send the same count, and are entitled to a prize then the amount of the prize is divided equally. Address

Fill out this Subscription and Count Blank
WOMAN'S WORLD, CHICAGO, ILL.
Enclosed find 25 cents for one year's subscription to Wo. man's World, which entitles me to one count in the four counts in your Lucky "7" Puzzle contest. I register my one count in the four counts in the blank below. Yours truly,
Name.....
Street, P. O. or Rural Route.....
City.....
State.....
25 COUNT 50 COUNT 75 COUNT

Note—Simply write in your count in figures, thus, 63.

WOMAN'S WORLD, Boyce Building, Chicago.

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Boy's and Girl's Corner

INTO THE JAWS OF DEATH

Or, Around the World on a $50,000 Wager.

By HIRAM RICE ROMANS.

[illegible] W. D. Boyce, [illegible]

[illegible] No. 4, Jan. 24. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, of our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

TOM ELLIOTT IN THE HANDS OF OPIUM.

When the bunch of silk which had been hurriedly crushed into Ella Navarre's mouth by the Chinese cabin boy was removed her hands were also released.

She looked around the dimly-lighted room and beheld half a dozen Chinamen, who viewed her curiously but with every sign of respect.

Pitty gal not 'frald now," ventured her former captor, bowing profoundly to her.

"What is the meaning of all this mockery?" demanded the terrified girl, endeavoring to be calm.

"Hel Melicun man would sell pitty gal to Mey Soong. Mey Soong old man. Allee samee fat, ugly; allee samee bad, too. Melicun gal no like Mey Soong. Mey Soong wives, one, nine wives. Melicun gal no likee Savvy?"

Ella nodded her head in appreciation of being relieved from such a fate, and her appearing friend continued, blandly:

"Gee Moy," pointing to himself, "come from Hong-ta, where live Wei-Ha, young Mandarin. Him likum Melicun gal velly much. Him likum makee Melicun gal queen, allee samee like queen. Melicun gal go with me?" he asked, smiling, thinking he was offering her a great boon.

"I thank you," said Ella, "for delivering [illegible]

[illegible] have no wife. Allee samee [illegible] was of a better half. "Wei-Ha want only one. You been him?" he further entreated.

"No," firmly answered Ella. "I am much too young to marry."

"Oh, yes, China gal marry likee, five year old, urged the basis in Gee Moy [illegible] emphatically no. Return me to my father. He will give you far more money than your high official will. You will all receive enough to live like princes the rest of your lives."

"No want money—Gee Moy, me"—pointing to himself—"and these," pointing [illegible] loose head. Glive pitty gal to Mandarin save head, allee samee live savvy?"

The man you will not release me—not for great handful of gold."

The eyes of the thrifty Chinaman glistened, but the thought of saving their heads was uppermost at that moment and the leader answered:

[illegible] head. Pitty gal clum with me?"

The offer of Gee Moy was much more attractive than that of Hong-ta, where the Mandarin was young and he had no wife, while Mey Soong was old, repulsive and had any number of wives. It made little difference to [illegible] to turns so being literally forced [illegible] a marriage, but there was always death to rescue her if it became absolutely necessary to save her from such a fate.

[illegible] become the mate of a heathen official [illegible] my months might elapse, and a healthy young woman life was sweet; too sweet to relinquish when she thought what might happen in those months. Perhaps she might be rescued. If not, the dagger, or poison.

"I will go," she said.

Instantly the Chinamen all fell to the floor, and kow-towed three times in solemn and respectful obeisance, after which several of them left the room, returning a moment later with one of the peculiar litter-like carriages which the nobility of China ride.

Getting it upon the floor the leader of the party requested Ella to enter.

"Are we going to start now?" asked Ella, feigning surprise.

"Bel Melicun man hunt soon. You no wantee go Mey Soong?"

"Then we go now," and again he bowed low as he held open the door of the carriage.

Seeing by the glitt [illegible] of his eyes that [illegible]

[illegible] four of the Chinamen took up the burden on their shoulders.

[illegible] out into the narrow street they went, the leader of the party going ahead with a torch and the two heavily armed men bringing up the rear.

The jogging trot of the men soon lulled the tired and exhausted girl to sleep and when she awoke the next day they were far out into the country, still jogging along in the order they had left the city of Hong-kong.

Late that same afternoon Tom Elliott hurried [illegible] to Mr. Navarre's hotel and [illegible] for that gentleman.

"My God, Tom! This calamity has come [illegible] unsettled me. I'm glad you came [illegible]

[illegible] Something about [illegible] [illegible] is it, and about all I know as yet. While I was talking with you yesterday afternoon somebody, presumably the same [illegible] fellow you encountered on the Bund, enticed Ella away from the hotel on some pretext and we cannot find any trace of her."

"It's awful! But surely the police—"

"Oh, police! the devil!" broke in Mr. Navarre. "I've offered a hundred thousand reward for her return and the imbecile devils just set and smiled at me, assuring that she would be found tomorrow."

"And tomorrow—began Tom.

"Is tomorrow in China. It never comes. They will promise anything. If she is ever found we must find her."

"But your reward?"

"Amounts to nothing unless it should induce one of the abductors to give evidence. The police would like it, but they don't know how to earn it they would be afraid of running into a set of brother Highbinders and Boxers who would kill them if any attempt was made to rescue her."

"Well, we'll find her ourselves then," asserted Tom, vehemently.

"Yes—dead or worse," sobbed Mr. Navarre, who at last had broken down under the fearful strain.

"Well, we'll be men and avenge her then," said Tom. "I'm on my mettle now and I'm good for a dozen such fiendish Chinese Pugs."

"Haven't seen him since last evening. I hope he isn't gone for good because he has known around amongst the Chinese in Chicago enough to understand some of their language."

"It would be just like that kid to get on track of the desperadoes. Perhaps he has gotten too close and been mobbed."

"May be."

"Where is Ella's wheel?" continued Tom observing its absence.

"I hadn't noticed it was gone. It was here last night when Pug and I were talking."

"Here this morning?" asked Tom.

"Yes—" hesitated Mr. Navarre. "Yes, I remember now of pushing it over out of my way."

"Then some one took it when you were out this morning."

"It must be."

"I'll bet it was Pug," commented Tom. Pity the kid couldn't write—he might have left word."

"You think—do you hone he is onto a clew?" asked Mr. Navarre brightening.

"Well, it's only a supposition, but that boy is a cute one. He's peddled his own canoe about the streets of Chicago for some years of fourteen years amongst the worst criminals in the city, put him against a famous detective on finding out the whereabouts of criminals even in a foreign city. He might just happen onto it, but then his instincts would lead him to the haunts of criminals because he knows their mode of life best."

As Tom was talking Mr. Navarre reached down and picked up a piece of white paper lying on the floor. There were some queer pencil hieroglyphics on it and he fell to studying them in an absent-minded way.

"Say, Tom, look here!"

Together they bent over poor little Pug's note, which resembled very much a four-year-old child's first letters on a slate.

"Why, that's as plain as if you or I had written it!" cried Tom. "That wonderful kid has trailed them home, and if you had been here when he came Ella might be on [illegible]

"Oh, God! that [illegible] it! Well, we [illegible] at once. Where have they gone? The note does not say."

"Yes it does! Don't you see? 'Chink Dave stole her.' That Chink Dave is David Lees of Chicago, famous for his unlawful business in smuggling opium and Chinese. He came pretty near getting a penitentiary sentence last winter, I remember, but the man who tried to drown me. Well, he entered her away from here, and later she was stolen by Gee Moy. This Gee Moy, evidently intending to take her to the [illegible] of Ling-ta to add to some rich man's Pug has got onto this and is trailing them on Ella's bicycle."

"Say, this is wonderful! It's the best news I've heard since I came in and said you were alive!" cried Mr. Navarre in animation. "They wouldn't harm the would they?"

"I think not. No, of course not, coveted Tom a guide and guard of the country [illegible] the older man.

"A guide, she was evidently only in Chinese Dave's control a few hours before the [illegible] how large a one. The best use a boy comic could make of her possession would be to gain the favor of his immediate principal, and thus secure the safety of her [illegible] harem. And that is what we must prevent."

"How can we prevent it?"

"Let us get started at once. Shall we take a guide and guard?"

"A guide only. A guard would desert us on the slightest pretext. We may be able to keep the guide until we overtake Pug."

The proprietor of the place was sum-

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noted and a guide secured through him. It was explained that they wished to overtake a boy on a bicycle who had left on the route to Ling-tu.

The guide blinked his understanding, and after heavily arming themselves they prepared to leave Hongkong. Mr. Navarre riding one of the extra wheels he had arranged to send on ahead of Tom.

Just as they were ready to push away from the hotel entrance several officials hurried up to them.

"I am very sorry," said an American official to Mr. Navarre, "but the information in your telegram to this young man has been the result of giving general knowledge that he did not meet death by falling from the Heights of Tai-ping-shan of the United States is imperative that he be arrested for murder."

"Say!" said Tom, getting off his wheel and approaching the officer, "you fellows are a fine lot! About all you are good for is to sit in your offices and wait for a fellow to come in and give himself up."

"We want no impertinence from you, young man!"

"Well, you'll get it free, so you might as well have it," sneered Tom. "Ella Navarre was abducted last night by Chinese Dave, one of the worst characters offending the Chinese laws made by the United States, and when the information is given you, you sit in your easy chairs and wait for him to come to and surrender, eh!"

"Chinese Dave!" cried one of the officers. "We had no idea he was here."

"Well, it's your business to know it. He's a dickens and I'm not. Perhaps that is why you knew I was coming here and didn't know he was."

"Your impertinence—" began the official.

"Never mind. I'm through. Chinese Dave is in the city; you find him. As for me, I'm going to help find Ella Navarre," and as he said this he knocked two of the officials sprawling, one with a right-hand blow, the other with a "Flashimoro left."

Mr. Navarre and the guide started as soon as they saw Tom's intention, and as he turned to put a question on the other police official his friends and guide were far down the street.

Tom started for his bicycle, but it was gone. A thieving coolie had grabbed it during the excitement and was far down the street in another direction.

Just then a gong clanged in pursuit one of the proprietor officials grabbed his ankles and threw him heavily to the ground, while another one pounced upon him, jingling a pair of handcuffs.

CHAPTER XIV.

PUG USES HIS BARLOW.

It was a wonderful chase across the wilds of China. Starting from Hongkong at intervals of about six hours were three parties destined for the same point, the city of Ling-tu, providing the fair American girl was not captured before that city was reached. In reality there were four parties, for one young friend, Pug, the newsboy, was a whole party by himself.

Ling-tu was nearly 2,000 miles distant from Hongkong and Gee Moy hoped to

The hand of the lad flashed upward.

cover this distance in about two months. His companions were hardy men, trained in bearing passengers in their peculiar carriages, and by relieving each other at stated intervals, were capable of covering from twenty-five to forty miles every day when the weather was good.

Til-ling, the residence of Moy Soong, the Chinese opium merchant, to whom Chinese Dave had intended to sell Ella Navarre as a bride, was nearly 1,000 miles from Hongkong, and, as it happened, in the same direction as Ling-tu.

The crafty Chinese Dave therefore decided to slow Gee Moy and his party to hold possession of Ella and transport her to within a short distance of Til-ling ere he made any attempt to secure her.

Gee Moy's party progressed rapidly. Familiar with the route of travel and supplied with the simple necessities for a Chinaman's existence, they covered the rough trail at a speed a' most incredible.

Chinese Dave and his party scarcely took time to sleep or rest until they had overcome the six hours' start of Gee Moy. Then, with a single man in advance, hovering in sight of Ella's captors, the rest of Chinese Dave's party dropped back, maintaining an even distance by observing marks left along the route by the spy ahead.

And then came Pug, the Chicago newsboy, who was not only proving himself a fine detective, but also an efficient scout.

Riding a bicycle across trackless Asia was about as pleasant a task as to try to ride the same thing in some of the uncleared forests and open fields of America.

Of course, there were paths, well-trodden and thoroughly marked, and sometimes there were really fine roads, but for the most part they formed a treacherous route for bicycle riders, especially to one who was in a hurry.

Pug still had plenty of nickels and dimes, the remainder of what he had secured from the Express official, so he had no trouble whatever in procuring something to eat.

Besides, he was not dainty in his craving for food, and took whatever was obtainable, a bicycle having him a most welcome among the almost destitute poor along the route.

Pug and the bicycle excited great wonder and comment, and many times he was forced to buy off the curiosity of some of the city officials. His slight knowledge of the language helped him along and he was able to get behind Chinese Dave and his party.

He usually managed to leave scene sign or token for Mr. Navarre and Tom whom he correctly believed to be following him, and thus the intrepid lad sped on his way.

The days were by one by one, week succeeded week, and still there was no sign of Mr. Navarre and Tom. Poor little Pug began to lose heart.

"Here I am gittin' furder an' furder into dis pigtail country an' some of dese here days 'll be lust, first ting I knows, or else some fellers 'll git to dat Ling-tu an' den what'll happen, I dunno.

"I'd like t' rescue Miss Ella, an' I guess I'd better try.

Several times he had been close enough to the party of Chinese Dave to observe them, but he had always fallen back to a safe distance when they were camping.

The night he concluded to pass them and hunt the Gee Moy party, he rode up close to the scene of the ambuscade. Then dismounting from the wheel, picked it up and swung it upon his shoulder, and then moved away from the path up into the shadows.

They were then in the western base of the Peling Mountains and not far from Til-ling, where the great opium merchant resided.

Pug made a circuitous trip around the camp of the outlaws and then came back to the beaten trail. It was almost pitchy dark in the shadows, yet here and there the moonlight stirred through the treetops.

The boy had stumbled and smashed his way through the growth of small trees until he was afraid he had made noise enough to arouse Chinese Dave and his party, so before he started ahead he stopped by the trail and waited to see if they would follow.

Several minutes elapsed, and, hearing no one, he went forward as briskly as he dared, hoping to encounter Gee Moy's party very soon.

A long, open stretch of territory spread out before him, and the moonshine falling

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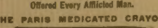

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upon the path full and bright, he covered several miles at good speed, discovering a party camped just at the border of a large forest.

He dismounted from his wheel and cautiously approached.

At one side of the party he saw a small fire, now smoldering away, while conspicuous above all was the canopied litter which Pug had learned to be the carriages used by the better class of Chinese travelers.

All of the party were apparently asleep save one stalwart Chinaman who stood guard, his huge frame propped against a tree.

"Don't see how I kin do much wid dat big bloke standin' dere. Wunst he gits his blinks on me an' I guess dat would end it."

Notwithstanding the desperate chance he was taking Pug was just dare-devil enough to make an effort to reach Ella Navarre's side and acquaint her of the fact that friends were near, even if he could not rescue her.

Leaving the wheel at a place he was certain he could again find it, the intrepid youngster stretched himself full length upon the turf and commenced to wiggle himself toward the group of prostrate forms.

"I'd like to stick a knife inter ye," he thought, as he paused a moment in arm's length of one of the party, "but I guess ye'd kick around, an' den some yaller guy would stick me."

The sentry moved from his place and Pug lay still, his pulse beating rapidly as the stalwart Chinaman slowly made a circuit of the little camp.

Apparently satisfied that all was well, he returned to the tree which seemed to attract him with its support for his weary form, and as he relapsed into his former indolent mood, Pug stealthily moved forward.

Once the litter was between him and the guard he moved more rapidly, and soon the curtain was in his hand. Pulling it aside slightly, he saw the lovely young girl sleeping within.

He put forth his hand and touched hers.

She awoke with a sudden start, and for an instant the boy was afraid she would scream.

"It's Pug," he whispered, as loudly as he dared.

She only stared at him in wonderment and surprise.

"I've follered dem yaller guys till I'm tired, an' I'm afraid Tom an' yer dad ain't a-comin', so I t'ought I'd better git ye now."

She put forth her hand and pressed his in silent appreciation of his daring.

"Now, I'm goin' over an' stick my Barlow in dat big feller by de tree, an' when you see him fall you just git out o' here as quick as ye can, an' come right toward him, 'cause I'll be dere waitin'."

Then the lad wiggled back among the sleeping men, and after watching the guard closely, got beyond the line, after which he arose and circled around to a place behind the unconscious man.

Stealthily he advanced. One would thought he had spent years upon the frontier, but the street waif was only acting upon the impulse of instinct.

When he had gained the other side of the tree he paused and clutched the handle of his Barlow knife tightly.

Slowly he edged around the tree until at last his eyes were upon the face of the guard who half-crouched, half-sat upon the curved trunk of the tree, his head bent back against a supporting knot.

Was he asleep?

The daring lad peered intently into his face.

No; 'twas but an indolent position assumed by the guard in assurance of perfect safety.

But alas for his assurance!

Like a flash the hand of the lad flashed upward till it was at a point near the guard's left ear; then swift and true he sunk the knife into the unconscious man's neck, and suddenly drew it toward him.

Without a gurgle or moan the guard sunk to the ground, his head half-severed from his body.

Instantly Pug looked toward the little camp and was delighted to see Ella Navarre coming stealthily but swiftly toward him.

"Oh, Pug," she whispered, "how can I ever thank you for this deliverance?" she whispered.

"I'm 'fraid ye can't," said the young hero, "an' it's a bad place t' try. Let's git."

Taking her hand, he led her swiftly to where the bicycle had been left.

"Now, you git on an' ride an' I'll walk," he said.

Ella did so and in a short time they were in the neighborhood where he had encountered the other crowd of desperadoes.

"Now, dere's anodder bunch of yeller cusses here," he explained, "an' Chinese Dave is wid 'em. He's de duck what's causin' all de trouble. We won't want to mix wid him, so I guess we'd better take to de woods fer a while."

"Where is my father?" asked Ella, as they scrambled along through the underbrush.

"Gee! I wisht I knowed! When I savvied what was doin' in Hongkong I left a letter for him an' Tom t' foller me, an' started."

"Has Tom come back?"

"'Spect so. Yer dad sed he was goin' to send fur him, an' I s'pose he did. Meantime, I got busy an' don't know no more'n you do."

"Oh, I hope they will follow on the trail and that we will find them."

"Yes; if we git rid of dis Chink Dave we'll double back an' mebby run inter dem somewhere. But Chink Dave has been follerin' Gee Moy, an' when he finds out you are free—den look out!"

There was but little chance for Ella and Pug to escape, even under ordinary circumstances, for if they succeeded in eluding one party they were in danger of running into the clutches of the other. It was a case of "jumping from the frying-pan into the fire."

Unknown to Pug he had been observed from the moment he approached Gee Moy's party until he led Ella from the path up into the wilds of Peling Mountains.

The spy whom Chinese Dave had placed ahead to watch Gee Moy's party was lying close to the trail as the lad rode by, and alarmed that something was about to transpire, he ran behind the bicycle until Pug abandoned it.

Then he stood back in the shadows and quietly watched the boy rescue Ella, secretly exulting in the thought that if the attempt was successful it would save them the effort, for before many more days Chinese Dave would order the girl's rescue on account of the close proximity to Tli-ling.

"Viely fline; allee samee good," he chuckled, as Pug and the girl sped back toward Chinese Dave's camp.

His thought was that Pug and Ella would stumble directly into the camp and be captured, so he made no effort to overtake them, being content to see them going straight ahead.

However, when they left the path and plunged into the forest he became alarmed and sped on to inform his friends.

Chinese Dave was astonished beyond measure when he heard the words of his spy.

"Who in tarnation is the kid bicyclist?" he thought. "Not Tom Elliott—he's dead! But here's a problem and it's got to be solved; come on!" and following the spy, they hurried to the place where Pug and Ella had left the trail.

Pug heard them coming and he glanced hurriedly about for a means of escape, but apparently there was none.

Scattered out for some distance the party was beating the bushes and coming directly toward them.

"Git up a tree," said Pug, and selecting one not hard to climb, he boosted Ella up to the lower limbs and then handed up the bicycle.

They managed to scramble up some distance and after the searchers had gone past Pug said:

"Now, let's git down and scoot."

The advice was followed, and soon they were back to the trail.

"Now you git on de wheel an' go fast as ye can. Here's some money," he said, giving her some of his small change. "It'll buy stacks of feed. Jes' say Hong-Kong to de Chinks an' foller de path. Mebby ye'll meet Tom an' yer dad."

"But you?" she asked.

"I'll come as fast as me legs 'll let me."

"But they may capture you!"

"Well, I'm not a girl, so dey won't want me. I'm nuttin' but a kid an' a bum one at dat. Now you keep agoin'."

"Well, goodby, Pug, dear," she said, the tears starting from her eyes. "I hope you will not get caught."

"Don't worry fur me."

And then she mounted the wheel and rode away.

"'Pug, dear,'" soliloquized the boy. "Now what do ye think o' dat!" But he was jogging along at a good gait on the back track.

Poor Pug did not know that the trail at this point made a circuitous course around a steep bluff, so he did not know that the searchers in going straight ahead would come out upon the path a short distance back. Nor did Ella; consequently when she rode straight into Chinese Dave and his party she was quite surprised.

"Well, I thought you were gone for good," said that worthy, as he took precautions to see that she was secured.

"But all's well that ends well," he quoted, "and Moy Soong will still be glad to welcome his pretty bride. But let's wait for the boy. I'm anxious to see who he is."

They had but a short time to wait, for the lad walked straight into the trap set for him.

"Well, if it isn't little Pug, the newsboy," said Chinese Dave. "How did you get here, kid?"

"Never you mind."

"But—"

"Cut it out. I t'ought I had ye done, but I didn't."

"Oh!" laughed Dave.

"But I'll git ye yet," said the boy.

"Well, tie him up good, fellows, and let's get on our way to Tli-ling before Gee Moy gets on our trail. Moy Soong must not be cheated out of his bride."

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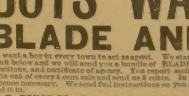

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

THE FOX AND THE FARMER.

"The trouble with you," said the fox, as he came up and sat down before the farmer, who was resting on the top rail of the fence, "is that you don't understand me. I've got to live, the same as you have, and, like you, I prefer fowl to any other meat. I pick up a rabbit now and then, and sometimes I make a meal off of field mice, but I must have a fowl now and then as a relish. I don't pass a bird of any sort if I can get hold of him, and if nothing better comes in my way I'll nibble at your garden vegetables."

"I've set a trap for you fifty times over, but you have never put your foot in it," growled the farmer.

"That's my good luck. You see, I was born with a nose on me. If you pick up a stick and carry it ten feet and throw it down I can smell you for two days after. It's little use to set traps for me. I can smell them yards away, and I know their use."

"But my old dog is too much for you."

"O, yes, when he sees me," laughed the fox, "but he was asleep when I carried off that last goose. As for speed, why, I can run two feet to your dog's one, and even when he is awake I can creep up and play with his tail. A dog is all right to bark at the moon and scare tramps and polecats away, but he doesn't worry a fox much."

"You seem to think yourself pretty smart," grinned the farmer.

"Well, yes, I do, and most others think so, too. Let me tell you a few things. I can swim out into a pond among wild geese or ducks and dive and get one by the legs, and that's more than you can do. You can dig a hole pretty fast with a spade, but I can beat you with my paws. If you ever try to dig a fox out of his burrow in the hillside you'll find that he can dig in faster than you can dig out. I have seen water all over the floors of your barn in the spring, but you won't find any in my burrow. I know how to dig drains to carry it off. If you find a woodchuck in a hole you can thrust in a stick and twist it into his fur and pull him out, but my burrow has three of four turns to it. You can't smoke nor drown me out, and should you send a dog in he'd have a hot time of it."

"I've heard say you were pretty cunning when the hounds were after you."

"Yes? It's not for me to brag, but I've had a score of hounds after me a dozen times over, and always got clear of them. I know enough to jump into a creek to hide my scent and to run along on the tops of walls and get among sheep. It isn't a month ago that I got among a flock and ran a mile or more with them, and, of course, the dogs lost my scent. I also have a litttle way of doubling back that causes the dogs much trouble. They'll get sight of me on ahead and set out to do their best, but the first thing they know I'm back where the chase started from. I'm no climber, like the coon or wildcat, but now and then I scramble up a leaning tree and take refuge in the top of a thick bush, and thus come out ahead.

"As to my ears, there are none sharper, and if you had on a dozen pairs of spectacles you couldn't see as well as I do without any. There have been occasions when I have been chased by the hounds that I have entered dwelling houses and crept under the bed, and thus bothered hounds and men, and once I sprang through an open cellar window and landed in a barrel of soft soap and almost scared an old woman into fits.

"Again, I jumped into an empty well bucket hanging in a well and was carried down to the water, and later on, when a boy drew me up, he yelled out at sight of me and ran away as fast as he could. I suppose all these things were talked about, and perhaps you read of them in the papers, but a fox has little time to listen to stories or look over the dailies."

"Any more smart things about you?" asked the farmer, as he made ready to go.

"Only a few," replied the fox. "No one has much use for a live fox, but the fur of a dead one is fashionable, and sells at a good price. Your wife or daughter will tell you that. Rugs and lap robes also are made of fox-skins, and in Russia every nobleman has a foxskin cap. That's enough for this time, however. I just came out of my burrow to have a little chat with you by daylight, but tonight I'll call around after a fat hen, and you needn't bother to get up if you hear her squawking."

Where Father Failed.

Willie's papa was very busily writing when the small boy came running in to him, holding up a pinched finger for his inspection.

"Run away, laddie, papa cannot make it any better," said papa.

Willie looked disappointed and then replied:

"Oh, yes, you could have looked surprised and said 'Oh!'"

Peeled Chickens.

A party of visitors to the country were very much interested last summer by the remarks of some children, sent out by the fresh air fund for a day in the country. There were quite a number of them playing about a pretty farmhouse one day, when some passer-by stopped and began to talk to them.

"Did you ever see any chickens before?" asked one lady, as a flock of fowls came strutting down the lawn.

"Oh, yes," said one of the eldest, wisely, with a knowing shake of his head, "we've always seen 'em—lots—only generally it was after they was peeled."

THE GAME LAW IS OUT.

No more the hunter takes his gun
And goes out after Bunny,
For if he kills a rabbit now
He knows 'twill cost him money.

So Bunny's heart is filled with joy,
No wrinkles cloud his brow;
Instead of slaying rabbits
It is rabbits sleighing now.

Baby's Picture.

"Look, mother; I've been drawing baby
On my nice new slate, you see,
I hope you'll think the likeness good
And say that it was kind of me."

"Oh, Tom! His mouth is far too big;
His dear, blue eyes are far too small;
I really can't admire your work;
The likeness is not good at all."

The little artist, thus reproved,
Said: "Mother, please don't think me rude,
But likenesses, of course, are bad,
Unless the child himself is good."

Wanted a Monopoly.

A small boy was taught the Lord's prayer and found it much to his taste. For a few days he kept it going with great assiduity, but then he announced to his mother in disgust:

"I heard another fellow say that prayer today, mother. It's going to get all around town."

Cause and Effect.

Little Eddie was looking at the drop of water through the microscope.

"Now I know," he said, after seeing the microbes darting around in the water; "I know what sings when the kettle is boiling; it is these little bugs."

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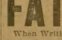

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